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SPOILERS NO MORE

Danish 'Yes' Unblocks EC Unity, but That's About All

By Howard LaFranchi

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

PARIS

JUST as releasing the brake is a necessary but insufficient step to setting a car in motion, Denmark's "yes" on May 18 in its second go at the European Community's Maastricht Treaty won't be enough to get European integration moving.

But if leaders across Europe and EC officials in Brussels expressed so much relief and satisfaction with the vote, it is because they knew the project for a European "union" was going nowhere without first unblocking the Danish impasse.

The 12-nation EC can begin "pulling out of a period of waiting and moroseness," said EC Commission President Jacques Delors after the referendum results.

The EC, virtually paralyzed since the Danes shocked Europe by rejecting the treaty last year, should now be able to address more openly Maastricht's implementation and such issues as a stalled European economy, the Community's sputtering Single Market, and the fragile European Monetary System, Brussels observers say.

The solid "yes," with 57 percent in favor and 43 percent opposed, makes Denmark the 11th EC member to ratify the treaty and is expected to boost Britain's plodding ratification process. **(British anxieties soothed, Page 7.)**

Nonetheless, the obstacles on the road to European integration, with the Maastricht plans for a single currency later in the decade and steps toward a common foreign policy and defense, won't be cleared up by one referendum. Europe's preoccupations have shifted significantly since EC leaders signed the treaty in December 1991.

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Bosnia Mediators Press On But Serb Holds Plan's Key

Milosevic rejects UN monitors as supplies still flow across border

By Jonathan S. Landay

Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BELGRADE

NOTWITHSTANDING new diplomatic efforts to save the UN peace plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina, hopes remain dim that it will be implemented in the wake of its defeat in last weekend's Bosnian Serb referendum.

Lord David Owen, one of the plan's two authors, expressed optimism yesterday that his peace plan for Bosnia was on track after Croats and Muslims agreed to separate their forces and set up coordination committees in three provinces where their troops have been fighting.

The plan's ultimate prospects, however, rest with President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, the Bosnian Serbs' estranged patron and the man held most responsible for the 13-month-old war that has claimed about 130,000 lives.

Motivated by United Nations sanctions that have destroyed Serbia's economy, and apparently concerned that Serbia would be targeted if the international community were to intervene militarily, Mr. Milosevic has recently swung his weight behind the plan.

But questions remain as to whether he can or means to implement the plan, which would divide Bosnia into 10 ethnic-based provinces and deny him his dream of merging the Bosnian Serbs' self-declared state with Serbia. He faces growing domestic political opposition to his new policy, observers here note.

"Milosevic ... cannot do too much, too quickly," one Western diplomat says.

Few doubt Milosevic wants to end the fighting to encourage the UN to lift the sanctions on the rump Yugoslav union of Serbia and Montenegro. Little proof, however, exists that he has increased pressure on the Bosnian Serbs. Despite the announcement earlier this month that Yugoslavia has cut all but humanitarian supplies to the Bosnian Serbs, traffic over the border shows no change.

Gasoline and diesel fuel remain available in massive quantities and at moderate prices at new, privately owned filling stations in Bosnian Serb-held areas. Convoys of trucks haul trees logged in Bosnian Serb-controlled

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New Deal-Era Rural Utility Subsidies Coming Under Fire

By Laurent Belsie

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ALBANY, MINN.

OFF Interstate 94, two blocks past the gas station advertising "Giant Leeches" for sale, sits the Albany Mutual Telephone Company. It's a modest place – 16 workers in a one-story building serving some 2,600 customers. Nevertheless Albany Mutual lies at the center of a political storm.

It is one of nearly 1,000 rural, independent telephone companies that receive federal loans. Congress wants to know why these New Deal-era subsidies should continue. Today the Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to hold hearings on the matter.

By Washington standards, the money involved is small potatoes. But the agency that hands it out – the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) – looms large to critics of big government. Even though the REA accomplished its primary mission

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NEAL J. MENSCHEL – STAFF/FILE

'JUICE' IN SOUTH DAKOTA: *The Rural Electrification Administration has always managed to keep its budget off of Congress's chopping block.*

Prison Survey Signals Role Of Drug Crime

AN estimated 21 percent of inmates in state prisons in 1991 were serving time for drug offenses, compared with 9 percent in 1986, according to a Department of Justice survey released yesterday.

The survey of the state prison population, which increased 58 percent between 1986 and 1991, came from interviews with almost 14,000 prisoners in 45 states. Other findings:

- 16 percent of inmates were armed with a gun when they committed the offense for which they were imprisoned.
- 47 percent of prisoners were serving time for violent offenses, compared with 55 percent in 1986.
- 94 percent of inmates had been convicted of a violent crime in the past or had received a previous sentence of probation or incarceration.

- In 1991, 65 percent of inmates were from minority groups, up from 60 percent in 1986.
- Of all state inmates in 1991, 5 percent were women, up from 4 percent in 1986.
- More than half of all prisoners did not grow up with both parents. About one-fourth had parents who abused drugs or alcohol. Just under one-third had a brother who had served time in jail or prison.

■ *Linda Feldmann reports from Washington.*

Gays compromise offered

A gay congressman is offering a compromise on permitting homosexuals to legally but quietly serve in the military, conceding that the American public is not ready for President Clinton's move to completely lift the ban on gays in uniform.

Rep. Barney Frank (D) of Massachusetts proposed a solution Tuesday that would allow gay and lesbian service members to do as they please off base as long as they keep their sexual preference secret while on duty.

Faced with strong sentiment against Clinton's proposal in the Senate Armed Services Committee and elsewhere in Congress, Representative Frank said the president didn't have the votes to overturn the existing ban on gays in the military and that he offered a change that could become the standard for years to come, given strong US antigay sentiment.

A White House official said he thought Clinton might be willing to accept the Frank compromise, especially if Sen. Sam Nunn (D) of Georgia, chairman of the armed services panel and an opponent of lifting the ban, agreed to it.

– Compiled by Ross Atkin

NATIONAL

While debate heats up in Congress over whether NAFTA will cost American workers jobs, the view from the border is positive

Laredo Thrives on Mexico Trade

By Scott Pendleton
Staff writer of the Christian Science Monitor

LAREDO, TEXAS

HERE in the nation's largest inland port, citizens predictably favor ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), even though some will admit that they are unsure how it will affect their already-thriving businesses.

"The 'sucking sound' of American jobs going to Mexico?" asks Mayor Saul Ramirez, scoffing at Ross Perot's prediction of the consequence of ratification. "That's not what we hear in Laredo. We hear the tractor trailers that come from Idaho, Ohio, [and] Tennessee" carrying United States exports to Mexico even before NAFTA, and "making the cash registers ring up north," Mr. Ramirez says.

Last year 3,600 trucks a day crossed Laredo's international bridges. Two-thirds were southbound, hauling 38 percent of Mexico's $40.6 billion worth of imports from the US. By the year 2000, the city forecasts truck crossings to rise to 10,000 a day without NAFTA, 16,000 if the treaty is ratified by the legislatures of Canada, the US, and Mexico.

"In a very real sense, what NAFTA hoped to create is already happening," says Mike de la Garza, a vice president of H-E-B Grocery Company.

"At least half of our sales go across the border," Mr. De la Garza notes. The San Antonio-based chain has 250 stores in Texas, including four outlets in Laredo and a fifth under construction.

In the 12 months ended last August, Laredo added jobs at the fastest rate of any Texas city.

"When Mexico's healthy, Laredo's healthy," says Beto Gutierrez, president of Armadillo Homes. He expects to build 200 of the 600 new homes likely to be built here this year.

"If this were 1982, I'd be hyping Laredo," Mr. Gutierrez adds. But he and other businessmen learned caution in 1983, when the peso's devaluation brought retail sales to Mexico to a standstill. "It was lights out," he recalls. "One day you owned a piece of property worth $20,000. The next day it was worth zero, and there were no buyers."

The importance of Mexico to Laredo merchants can be seen in the fact that in 1981 this low-income city led the US with an amazing $40,000 in retail sales per household. As much as two-thirds was actually attributable to Mexican shoppers.

In the first year after devaluation, 300 stores closed in the downtown shopping district. The same number failed the next year. "It was barren," Mayor Ramirez says. Only 87 residential building permits were issued in 1983.

Now the city of 140,000 is bustling again. A thousand residential permits were issued in 1992. Lack of utilities, not slack demand, holds down construction.

Last year's retail sales of $1.9 billion were nearly double the 1981 figure. Stores again swarm with shoppers from Mexico.

Many Mexican shoppers work in the 58 *maquiladora* (foreign-owned) factories in Nuevo Laredo, a city three times as populous as its US sister. Others drive from the interior of Mexico.

Raúl Cárdenas, the Mexican consul, notes with less than approval the Mexican license plates in the parking lot of Laredo malls. "Some products bought here can be bought in Mexico," he notes. In December, Mexico began enforcing a duty-free limit of $50 per trip "to protect Mexican industry" and "increase the sales of Mexican merchants," Mr. Cárdenas says.

Vision '93, an annual economic outlook report prepared by Laredo State University, says the limit had a short-term effect: "Entrepreneurial Mexican shoppers quickly learned that they could increase their quota by $50 for every neighborhood child that they brought shopping with them."

Mr. De la Garza says H-E-B isn't feeling squeezed by the duty-free limit, but then "three or four bags of groceries may not look like much" to a customs official, compared with a television set, he says.

Mayor Ramirez and some retailers insist the limit is still being felt. "Trade has hit a plateau," Ramirez says.

Al Serrano, manager of the local Wal-Mart store, believes the limit hurts all stores, but isn't sure what his business volume would have been without it. Right now he is concerned about new duties of 100 to 1,000 percent that Mexico has begun to levy on products made in China. Many Laredo stores carry some goods made in China, Mr. Serrano figures.

He says the duties against China were imposed to stem imports of cheap shoes – an influx that hurt Mexican producers.

What will happen, he wonders, if the same thing happens to Japan next month? And would NAFTA make any difference? "You read all kinds of point of view," he says. "It's just one of those wait-and-see situations."

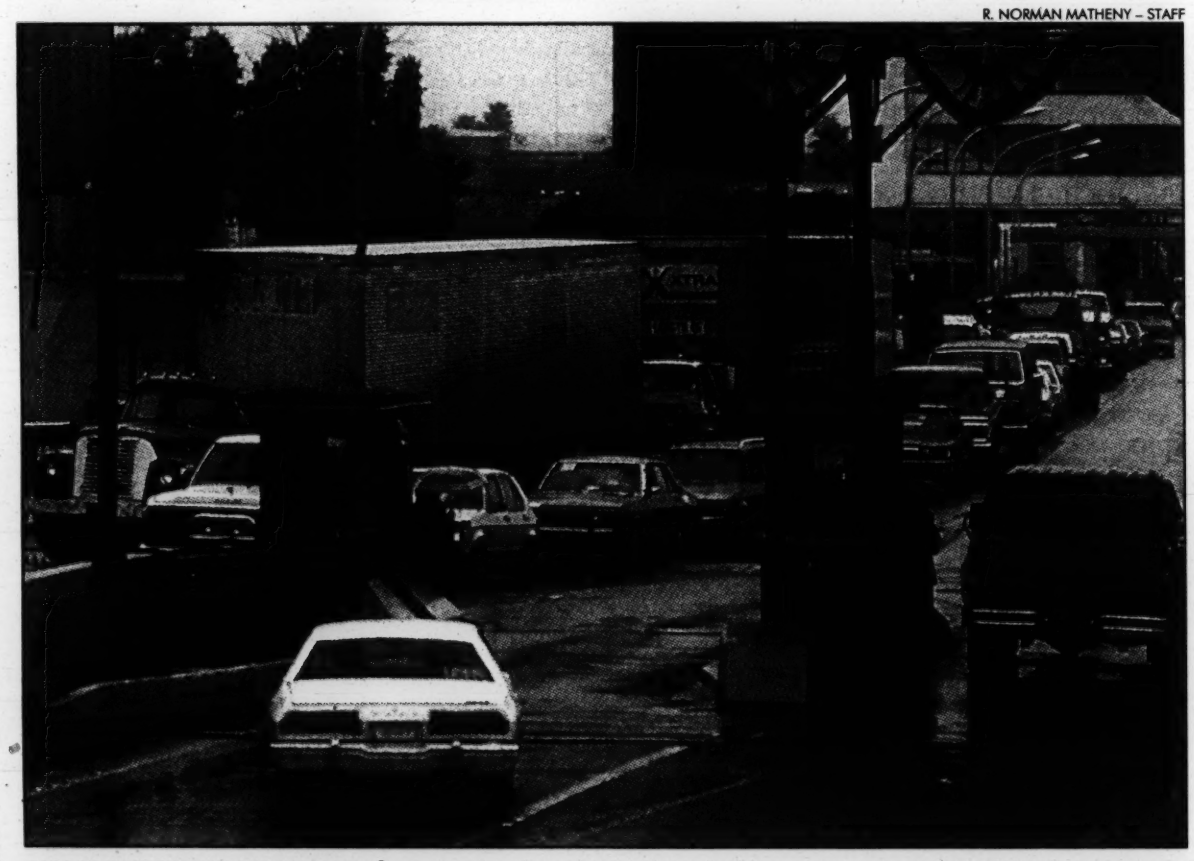
De la Garza says that NAFTA will simply streamline and accelerate trade activity. Most importantly, ratification by the US "would send all the right signals" to Mexico. President Salinas has worked hard to eradicate the Mexican perception of the US as hostile exploiters, he says.

Cárdenas says the Mexican government is confident that a wary US Congress will ratify NAFTA in time for it to take effect next January, as scheduled. "It is natural for neighbors to trade with each other."

But Laredo may not benefit as much from that trade after NAFTA. Vision '93 notes that Mexican shoppers cross the bridge because of better availability of products at a lower price.

It is possible "that the full implementation of NAFTA, by making more US-made products available and price-competitive in Mexico, will adversely affect both of these reasons," the report says. Thus, NAFTA "will make retail sales in Laredo even less reliable."

R. NORMAN MATHENY – STAFF



CARS LINE UP TO ENTER US, LAREDO: *Cross-border shopping and truck shipments are booming. But a free-trade agreement might make shopping in this Texas city less attractive to Mexicans as stores in Mexico improve.*

NAFTA Seen as Key To Regional Growth, Democratic Gains

By Amy Kaslow
Staff writer of the Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

THE White House-congressional battle over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is yet another struggle over jobs. The score will be settled by both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, but its implications will reach far beyond domestic affairs.

Pushing the three-nation pact, the Clinton administration says it will create the largest free-trade zone in the world with the greatest opportunities for robust economic growth.

"Its benefits notwithstanding, NAFTA is turning out to be a hard sell here in the US," says Labor Secretary Robert Reich.

Ernest Hollings (D) of South Carolina, chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, echoes

ANALYSIS

the concerns of some Capitol Hill Democrats. "NAFTA is the wrong idea, at the wrong time, for all the wrong reasons. Instead of securing a bright future, the agreement will lead to lower US wages, lost jobs and opportunities, and the exodus of important sectors of American industry [in search of cheaper ways to produce goods across the southern US border]."

While Mr. Reich and others concede short-term job losses, they predict long-term gains for US productivity. Open borders and the free flow of goods and services will help develop economies in Latin America and create demand for US products, NAFTA supporters say. And, they add, a sounder Mexican economy will provide a basis for more ecological responsibility in Mexico.

Max Baucus (D) of Montana, chairman of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, says the message President Clinton and the Congress must deliver is simple: Mexico has much higher trade barriers than the US; if Washington fails to enact NAFTA, those barriers will remain.

By eliminating Mexican barriers, Mr. Reich says, the US will boost its burgeoning exports there, which accounted for a $5.5 billion US trade surplus in 1992.

NAFTA is essential to democratic and economic gains south of the border, Mr. Baucus says. "[Mexican] President [Carlos] Salinas [de Gortari] is banking his party's future – and his country's future – on the successful passage of the agreement."

US prospects are also closely linked, he adds: "A strong, vibrant Mexican economy means a better opportunity to sell American products."

Enrique Iglesias, president of the Inter-American Development Bank, says US producers should use NAFTA to tap other regional markets. "Forty percent of Japanese exports are are not produced in Japan," Mr. Iglesias says, referring to one of America's toughest competitors. "Why don't we see this [the availability of cheap Mexican labor through NAFTA] as increased capacity for US exports?"

Iglesias calls for an agreement that transcends the borders of the US, Mexico, and Canada. The more market-driven the region, he says, the better US prospects for trade and investments. To keep developing countries out of the pact would work against the important goal of "establishing common ground in economic principles:" liberalized trade, open investments, and free labor transfers.

"The North American option is very important to Caribbean, Central and South American countries," he says. "The critical mass of NAFTA will help move these other economies along."

Quebec's Minister of International Relations John Ciaccia, whose province accounts for one quarter of Canada's economy, agrees that NAFTA can do a lot to develop the regional economy.

He is bullish on the pact, despite the massive trade deficit Quebec racked up with Mexico last year, when it imported four and a half times more that it exported.

"We have to talk about the importance of free trade," says Mr. Ciaccia. "Mexico is a growing economy. We had 25 Quebec companies in Mexico five years ago. We now have 150 – and three quarters of them went since the negotiations for NAFTA began."

Clinton's "White House has to take [such arguments] to the American people," says Ciaccia. Canada's own parliament is scheduled to reach a decision on NAFTA before countrywide elections for the new prime minister are held in the fall.

PRESIDENT VISITS GOLDEN STATE

Clinton Zeroes In on Reviving California's Sagging Economy

By Scott Armstrong
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

VAN NUYS, CALIF.

WHILE President Clinton was pitching his economic program in the shade of a bottle-brush tree here this week, Charles Hill was across the street working on the books at Dad & Me Auto Repair.

Mr. Hill, the "Dad" in the business he has owned for 25 years, says he thinks Mr. Clinton could be doing better with the nation's bookkeeping.

He is willing to accept higher taxes, of the right sort, but wants to be sure they are put toward debt reduction. Though not a Clinton supporter, he is willing to give the new president time before judging too harshly.

"The man has got a mean job ahead of him," he says, fiddling with a power screwdriver. "He's our president and we need to give him a chance."

Clinton faces an undercurrent of impatience as he takes his economic message outside the bubble of Washington's Beltway.

Even many detractors appreciate his earnestness and believe four months is too short to be writing a presidential epitaph.

But even supporters concede that whatever economic plan the president and Congress ultimately cobble together better yield improvements down in the body shops and industrial bayous of America.

"This is deliver time," says Samuel Popkin, a political scientist at the University of California, San Diego. "At some point, there will have to be results."

Ron Brown put on California 'case'

In few places are the expectations higher than California, where the economy continues to limp along and where the president's talk of "change" found widespread resonance last fall. In his latest trip to the area, as in ones in the past, he reiterated the need to revive California if the United States economy is to turn around.

He has put Commerce Secretary Ron Brown in charge of developing a federal strategy to help the Golden State. Mr. Brown has been to California seven times in the past four months, highlighting the state's importance to the White House as a political base.

The talk of special attention plays well here – as do the images of the president shooting hoops in South Central, talking amiably with students at Los Angeles Valley College, and jogging with Navy SEALs, members of the sea-air-land Special Forces unit, on the beach in San Diego.

But beneath the handshakes and sound bites will eventually come the dollar-and-cents amounts of federal aid, and whether this aid reaches anyone.

"It's nice if people accept the idea that California is going to get help," says California pollster Mervin Field. "But then they start to look at how it is going to relate to their job."

Top Democrats remain optimistic about the potential for benevolence from Washington. The state is getting $900 million to help reimburse the costs of immigration, less than some would like but more than others expected.

Other aid that would impact California is tied up in the president's "stimulus" package, killed in Congress. Although he vows to revive portions of it, there is no assurance Republicans – or the public – are in the mood for more spending.

WIN McNAMEE/REUTERS

T.L.C. IN LOS ANGELES: *President Clinton consoles Leonard Baylor after the youngster broke down in tears while welcoming Mr. Clinton on behalf of local kids in the city's South Central area.*

The state will also be affected by the president's high-tech initiative, and by whatever money goes into helping defense workers find civilian jobs. Clinton vows to make California a "national model" for defense conversion.

"I think he recognizes more than anyone that the state needs special attention," says Bill Press, state Democratic Party chairman.

Still, the president's standing here will ultimately turn on his economic wizardry more than on any federal largess. On this, and other issues, he still draws mixed reviews:

■ Retiree Edward (Bud) Maggiore calls Clinton an "empty suit" – someone who doesn't keep his word. A Ross Perot supporter, he wants fewer taxes and more spending cuts. His biggest concern, though, is stopping the influx of illegal immigrants across the southern US border.

■ Ida Gurvin, who watched the presidential motorcade zip past her house this week, supports Clinton, with one exception. "I'm not in favor of all the taxes," she says, standing in front of her tidy San Fernando Valley home. "I can't afford them."

■ Meledy Sheldon took her nine-year-old daughter out of school to see the president. She faults him for not keeping all his promises, but is optimistic about his presidency. She urges more spending on education. On her no-no list: sending US troops to Bosnia.

Mayor's race ahead

One gauge of the president's clout in Los Angeles will come in the mayor's race next month. Clinton endorsed Democrat Michael Woo this week. He is in a tight race with millionaire Republican Richard Riordan.

The endorsement might bring Mr. Woo some badly needed campaign funding. Appearing at the president's elbow could also help the youngish candidate overcome a "gravitas gap."

Woo trails Mr. Riordan in the largely middle-class San Fernando Valley, an important swing-voter district Clinton did well in last November.

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Poignant evidence of this appeared on late-night news in France May 18, when reports on Denmark's vote lagged behind stories on rising French unemployment and news that for the first time since the Bosnian war began, Sarajevo was without bread. Earlier in the day, France's new pro-European, center-right government unveiled its European policy before a deserted parliament, and a fresh poll showed that if they voted today, the French would reverse their weak approval of the treaty in September and turn down Maastricht.

"The fact is that until the [European] governments are seen as having some success in bringing down unemployment, progress toward the kind of integration outlined in Maastricht will not be very great," says Soren Morch, a historian at the University of Odense in Denmark. As long as unemployment that already affects 17 million EC residents continues growing, "it will lead to stronger nationalist sentiments," he adds, "and little public interest in European union."

Unlike a year ago, the Danes this week voted on a tailored treaty that allows Denmark to "opt out" of Maastricht's central provisions: a single currency, a common foreign and security policy, a common European citizenship, and increased police and judicial cooperation.

DESPITE the Danish vote, debate is certain to continue on what effect Denmark's initial "no" and the granting of these exceptions will have on the Community's development. For some, the essential point is that the darkest cloud over Europe's integration process has been lifted, while others say the process has been fundamentally altered.

In any case, no one expects any grand proposals for getting European integration moving again any time soon. "The question of how [the EC] proceeds over the next two to three years was not decided [Tuesday] in Denmark," says Peter Ludlow, director of the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels.

Adding that future action will be "decided by European leaders and determined by their political situations at home," Mr. Ludlow says he expects "a relatively quiet, possibly stagnant period" until after German legislative elections next year, and French presidential elections in 1995.

In changing their vote, the Danes did not convert to support a more activist Community. What they were expressing, according to exit polls, was a resignation that Denmark risked a dangerous isolation, especially in the economic arena, if it voted "no."

Uneasiness over the consequences of a "no" in an unstable Europe was another factor that resigned a people viscerally opposed to "union" to a yes vote, Mr. Morch says.

"It was the fear of war" that underpinned the acceptance of Maastricht, Morch says. "It was not an approval of what Europe has done, but worries about the spread of the disintegration we are seeing" in the former Yugoslavia.

In that sense, the vote indicates a growing if grudging public acceptance of something European officials have been saying for months: Post-cold-war Europe has no choice but to forge a unified position from which to address the continent's instability.

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regions to lumber mills in Serbia.

Bosnian Serb authorities say they are still free to do business in rump Yugoslavia, a main source of financing for their war efforts. "Our goods are not stopped from entering Serbia," says Dragan Spasovic, the mayor of the Bosnian Serb-controlled border town of Zvornik, which produces textiles.

In talks with visiting Russian Foreign Minister Alexei Kozyrev Tuesday, Milosevic declined Moscow's proposal to deploy UN monitors on the border to ensure that nothing but food and medicines cross into Bosnia.

"If Serbia is forced to accept controls on the border with Bosnia, Milosevic could really be placed in a very difficult position," says Stojan Cerovic, a leading political commentator for the Belgrade's Vreme magazine, explaining Milosevic's domestic political problems.

In keeping with the ironies of the crisis, Milosevic's most outspoken critic is a politician of his own creation: Vojislav Seselj, the pistol-toting leader of the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party.

Promoted by the Milosevic-controlled media, Mr. Seselj's party won second place in federal and republic polls in December. It has provided Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) with the support it needs to maintain minority governments at the federal level and in Serbia.

But Seselj is incensed over Milosevic's support for the peace plan and his "betrayal" of the Bosnian Serbs, observers say. Should Seselj withdraw his backing for the SPS governments, new elections probably would be needed and Milosevic would lack crucial support.

A dedicated adherent to the cause of "Greater Serbia," Seselj commands strong loyalties within the Yugoslav Army and other security services. Milosevic has to move carefully in isolating Seselj and his supporters before consolidating his power and dealing with the Bosnian Serbs, Western diplomats here say. Recent moves indicate that he and his allies in the Army high command have begun doing just that.

The Yugoslav Army general staff issued a statement Tuesday condemning recent attacks by Seselj on the military and its senior-most commander, Col. Gen. Zivota Panic, whom the radical leader accused of corruption.

The statement alleged that two senior generals forced to retire recently had acted as Seselj's moles inside the military and that he was seeking the ouster of the hierarchy for supporting Milosevic's about-face. It accused Seselj of seeking to "use" the Army for his "party and political goals," and said that his "constant and various attacks on the Yugoslav Army have for their goal the destabilization of the state and its armed force."

The Army appears to be laying a possible basis for Seselj's prosecution on sedition charges.

The Belgrade newspaper Borba, meanwhile, Tuesday reported that preparations may be under way to prosecute on charges of abuse of power one of the retired generals linked to Seselj, as well as the nationalist Yugoslav Airforce commander and a former federal vice president opposed to the peace plan.

"Milosevic has finally begun to move. He and the Army are cracking down on Seselj and sending out signals not to line up with this guy," a diplomat says.

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decades ago, it still lingers on.

"REA is symbolic of an endemic problem in public policy," says Fred Smith, president of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a pro-market public-interest group in Washington, D.C. "It's not easy to tear out old programs."

The REA was created in 1935 to bring electric power to rural America. The private utilities of the day typically focused on the lucrative potential of electrifying cities. So the REA offered low-interest loans to rural cooperatives so they could string their own power lines and manage them. The program worked. By the late 1940s, much of the countryside had electric power. The agency then broadened its mandate to give low-interest loans to rural telephone companies, giving rural residents cheaper telephone service.

Since then, the ranks of REA critics have grown. Three of the last four administrations tried to trim, reform, or eliminate the REA. At least two US congressmen currently have bills that would end the program. The Clinton administration is proposing to reform the system, raising the agency's interest rates from 5 percent to market levels. That would save an estimated $374 million over the next four years.

The agency lives on – thanks in large part to the nation's rural electric-power cooperatives and independent phone companies, which have always managed to convince Congress to keep REA off the chopping block.

"It's a wonderful, very effective government program," says Michael Brunner, executive vice president with the National Telephone Cooperative Association. "One of the big things we are trying to do is keep and attract economic development to rural America." By providing state-of-the-art telecommunications and reasonably priced electricity, the REA is doing just that, he says.

The key question, of course, is

A number of interests would like to modify the way REA does business, if not end its long, successful tenure.

whether it's worth taxpayers' money to accomplish that. Do the benefits of REA justify its $2 billion-a-year price tag? If not, should it be restructured or eliminated?

Even ardent supporters would like to restructure REA. One problem is that its loans are not targeted. They may be a boon to struggling cooperatives in the rural Midwest, but a 1987 Office of Management and Budget study found REA money flowing into such high-toned communities as Hilton Head, S.C., and Vail, Colo. Another problem is that the REA discourages the cooperatives from private-sector borrowing.

Should the REA be eliminated completely? Albany Mutual, one of the successful rural phone companies in Minnesota, could get along without it. The low-debt, $8 million company would probably not even have to raise its phone rates because of the subsidy loss, says company manager John Rose. He's confident that Albany Mutual could find alternate funding in the private sector. Even though Albany Mutual only serves 5.5 customers per mile of phone line (compared with densities of 100 or more for large regional companies, such as USWest or NYNEX), it charges only about half of what USWest charges for basic service.

Not all the rural independents are so fortunate as Albany Mutual. Some independent phone providers serve areas with declining populations or so sparsely peopled to begin with that REA subsidies play an important role. The Dell Telephone Cooperative in West Texas averages only one customer for every 10 miles of phone line.

The other big change if REA disappears would be the pace at which rural systems would modernize.

Ironically, small independent companies have introduced new technology far more aggressively in rural America than the giant regional Bell companies. This week, for example, USWest announced it would invest $2.5 billion in a deal with Time Warner to bring its customers a new generation of interactive television. But USWest still hasn't upgraded nearby Avon, Minn., to digital technology, Mr. Rose says. Albany Mutual has been all-digital since 1985.

Without REA loans, "the developments wouldn't come anywhere near as fast," says Paul Hoff, general manager of the Park Region Mutual Telephone Company in western Minnesota.

There is something hidden in this beautiful pastoral scene repeated in many parts of our nation and around the world. You may not realize that the hidden facility is vital and most important to you, your neighbors, your fellow businessmen, your nation's economy and security. The only way one can realize the presence of such an important thing is the small but "oh, so important" warning line marker or sign.

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INTERNATIONAL

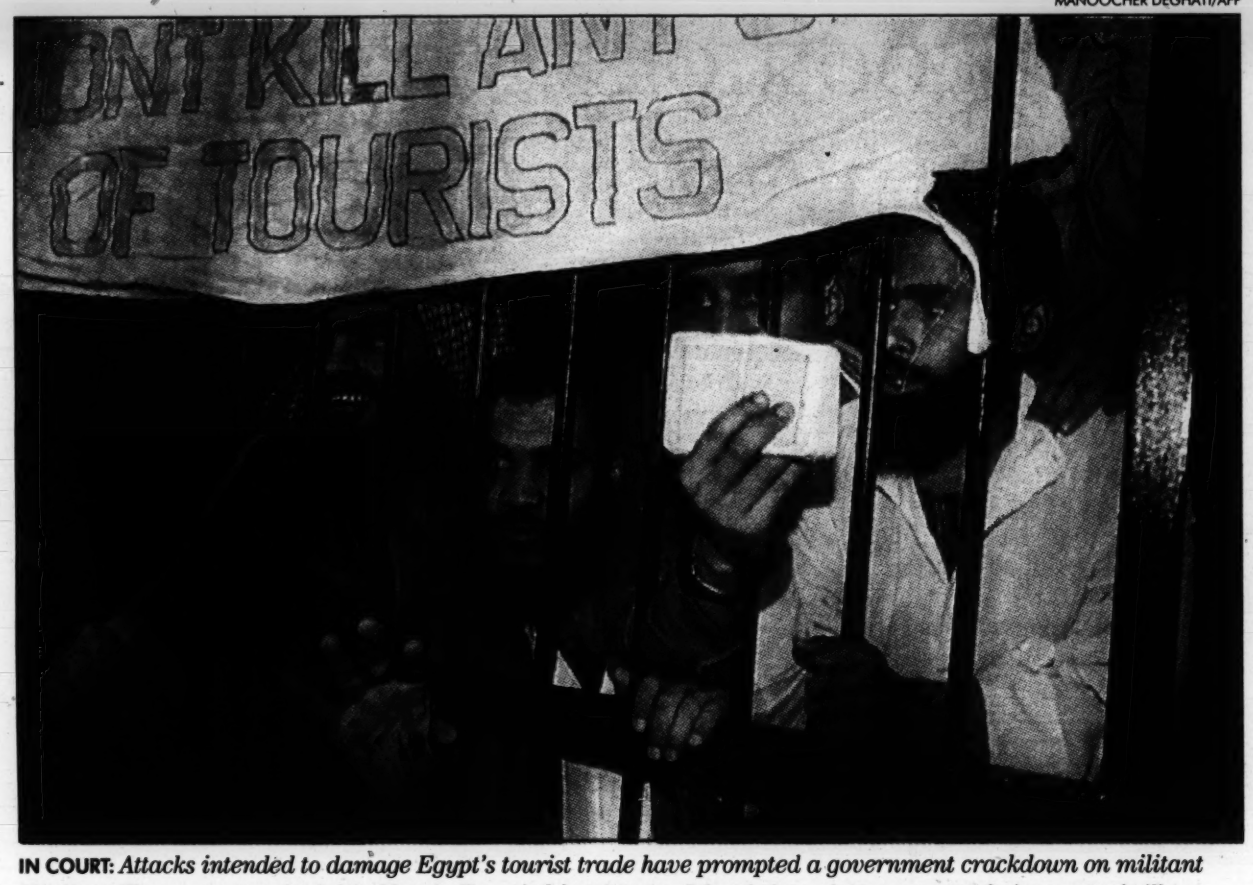
The Risky Existence of an Egyptian Extremist

Middle-class radical describes his motives and the personal cost of religious politics

By Sarah Gauch
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

CAIRO

MANOOCHER DEGHATI/AFP



IN COURT: *Attacks intended to damage Egypt's tourist trade have prompted a government crackdown on militant Muslims. These men stood trial in March. Egypt's Islamists say Islamic law alone can cure their country's ills.*

ABDULLAH walks up the narrow stairs above his shop in this crowded Cairo slum. He points to the iron door at the entrance.

"When the government comes they don't knock," he says.

Abdullah, not his real name, is a short, stocky man with a bushy, salt-and-pepper beard. He wears a gray robe and black, unlaced sneakers. On his forehead is a brown callus caused by repeated supplications on his prayer rug.

A member of Egypt's radical *Gamaa Islamiya* (Islamic Group), Abdullah lives a precarious existence. His organization, whose spiritual leader is Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the Islamic preacher whose followers have been accused of bombing New York's World Trade Center, seeks to replace the government of President Hosni Mubarak with a state based on the *sharia* or Islamic holy law. Members say that is the only way to end official corruption and alleviate worsening economic conditions.

As Egypt's government responds to extremist violence with the most pervasive crackdown on suspected militants since the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, Abdullah and his comrades are preparing for open confrontation with the state.

The streets of this slum, known as Imbaba, are piled high with garbage and glazed in dust – dust on the buildings, the stores, even the donkeys and their carts. Children with tangled hair play ball and idle men in dirty robes socialize over glasses of tea. Stray dogs scavenge through the trash.

It is in these indigent surroundings that militant Islamists plot the creation of an Islamic state. "We want sharia. That's it," says a local sheikh with a scraggly beard and dark-rimmed glasses. "When we apply what God says, everything will be alright. God will plant for us. God will bring us food. We won't need America anymore."

They would even accept the present government if it would apply sharia, the sheikh says. But rather than listen to God, he argues, the administration follows the wishes of the United States.

Egypt's extremists have long targeted Coptic Christians and police officers in their struggle to establish a pure Islamic state. But last summer they increased their profile, bombing buses and cafés in a campaign of violence against foreign tourists. Although those attacks have fallen off, they embarrassed the government and continue to damage the tourism trade – the country's main hard-currency earner at more than $3 billion per year. Egyptian officials estimate that the industry lost between $700 million and $1 billion last year due to the attacks.

Increasingly, the Mubarak administration has responded with force. In early December, 14,000 police raided Imbaba, detaining hundreds. In the latest action, security forces yesterday said they had arrested more than 800 suspected members of a previously unknown Islamist group.

ABDULLAH says the root cause of the Gamaa's attacks against foreign tourists and Egyptians is the government, which Gamaa members say started the violence. "The police beat them [the Islamic Group] in the streets, so what should they do? They must fight back," he says through an interpreter.

The Islamists here discount the violence, and insist their main method of achieving a pure Islamic state is to invite people to believe in God. They are convinced enough Egyptians will eventually accept their invitation and force the secular government to become a religious one.

That calling has growing appeal for a population whose survival is becoming increasingly difficult. As Egypt moves toward a free market, prices are rising and the gap between upper and lower classes is growing. Government corruption and limited democratic freedoms increase people's despair, further pushing them to join an opposing movement.

"Their [the Gamaa's] message resonates for Egyptians for several reasons. One is a discrediting of politics, the other is a feeling of despair because of economic difficulties," says Mohamad Sayed Ahmed, a prominent journalist. He cites "a feeling of injustice where some are so easily rich and others so poor without any explainable reasons."

Abdullah, mild-mannered and courteous, doesn't fit the common image of an extremist. He has three children – two teenage sons and a teenage daughter who wears a long head covering that falls over her shoulders and reaches to her hands. Her blue skirt touches the floor.

The owner of a shop he took over from his father, he earns a salary of $300 per month, far above the country's average monthly income of $40. He did not go to college; he left high school at 16 and joined the Army at 19. He believes Egypt won the 1973 war against Israel, and did so because servicemen became more devout after the country's 1967 defeat at Israeli hands. "We were victorious in '73 because we began to believe in God."

After the Army he joined an extremist group in Imbaba that called for the government to implement the sharia. "When I saw the love between all the brothers, this affected me and I wanted to be like them," he says. "They were trying truly to apply what I read in the Koran," the holy book of Islam. He has gone to prison once or twice a year for the last seven years, and claims to have been tortured frequently while incarcerated.

"This no longer affects me," he says, seated on the chair covered in pink and green flowered upholstery in the family's sitting room. "I am used to being arrested and freed and arrested and freed. Its part of my struggle to believe in God," he insists. "But it affects my family."

Women and children have not been free from arrest. According to reports by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights and the New York-based Middle East Watch, the Egyptian police detain and torture relatives of suspected Islamic militants to force extremists to give themselves in or to elicit information.

Officials deny these charges. "To act against the people's human rights is a very dangerous crime in Egyptian law," says Baha al-Din Ibrahim, an interior ministry spokesman. "If there are ... abuses the victim can ask the judge to take measures against those who commit this crime."

"I get faint each time the police come," says Abdullah's wife, the toll of her husband's political leanings evident in her face. "I don't sleep. I'm afraid."

Abdullah says his teenage son has been arrested twice since last fall. Three months ago the security forces blindfolded and beat him over a seven-day period. His son's good friend, he says, who was detained at the same time, is still in prison. Four of the family's friends have been killed.

"The government is wrong, thinking I am an extremist," says the son, a whispery moustache on his upper lip. "I haven't done anything. I just pray at the mosque."

Abdullah says some people in his neighborhood no longer speak to him because of his politics. The man who once delivered tea and coffee, for example, was beaten and interrogated by the police. He no longer comes.

Some in Imbaba are avenging their vendettas by turning innocent people into the security forces. "If someone hates someone else they'll call the police and tell them your a militant," comments one resident.

SUSPICION is everywhere. Newcomers are eyed carefully. Questions are answered evasively.

But some in the community have not been cowed by the crackdown. Wealthier neighbors financially assist poorer families whose relatives have been arrested or killed.

The militants still gather in Abdullah's shop. Most of the men in the shop have long beards, marking their religious convictions, some short and trimmed, others wild and unmanageable.

For many, the government crackdown and mass detentions just confirm their convictions. "Everytime they beat me I believe more in God, because religion is the only way," says a carpenter.

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Enclave of Kaliningrad plays up German roots, makes Moscow wary of its bid for special status

Russia's Baltic Foothold Looks West for Investors

By Justin Burke
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

KALININGRAD, RUSSIA

HISTORY is taking an ironic twist here as authorities strive to revive the collapsed economy.

This Baltic Sea city's destiny first took a sharp turn April 9, 1945, when the Red Army "liberated" it following a fierce fight against Nazi troops, a battle that destroyed about 90 percent of the center. Under the Potsdam Treaty on postwar Europe, the Soviet Union annexed the city and surrounding territory, formerly known as East Prussia – and the destruction continued.

To facilitate Sovietization, the new authorities obliterated centuries of Germanic influence. In 1946, the city changed names from Königsberg to Kaliningrad, honoring the former Soviet chief of state Mikhail Kalinin. Then, between 1947-48 virtually all German civilians – more than 100,000 – were deported to what became East Germany.

But now regional officials are trying to restore what little remains of the area's Germanic heritage, hoping to make it more attractive for Western investment. Some landmarks that have lain in ruins for years – such as a 13th Century cathedral where the philosopher Immanuel Kant is buried – are undergoing restoration. Authorities here profess loyalty to Russia, but they are focusing on the West, especially Germany, to power the local recovery.

For its part, Moscow is not eager to help Kaliningrad lay the groundwork for semi-integration with the West. Although Moscow declared Kaliningrad a Free Economic Zone, it has done little else to enhance the region's attractiveness to investors. Such action, some Moscow officials say, could contribute to the breakup of the Russian Federation.

Officials here argue that Kaliningrad's geographical position makes it a natural bridge for trade with the West. The territory is completely cut off from Russia proper, bordered by Lithuania, Poland, and the Baltic Sea.

"We'd like to reintroduce this city into the ring of old Hanseatic League cities," says Vladimir Toropov, deputy chief of the Kaliningrad Region Administration, referring to the economic alliance of Baltic Sea centers that thrived between the 13th and 15th centuries. But integration efforts have run into roadblocks. Currently, Kaliningrad is wrangling with Moscow over a proposed law that would grant the region special status. Kaliningrad officials envision the draft law – now being discussed in parliamentary committees – as giving the region economic autonomy, while preserving political ties with Moscow.

HEADED FOR BREAKUP?

But with Moscow struggling to contain several restless autonomous republics – nominal ethnic homelands that are agitating for greater sovereignty – many in Parliament are unreceptive to Kaliningrad's bid to gain increased decisionmaking powers.

SHIRLEY HORN – STAFF

The granting of special rights to Kaliningrad could spark other Russian regions to seek similar powers, further weakening the ties that keep Russia together. In addition, Russian nationalists worry that special status could invite attempts by Germany, Lithuania, and Poland to claim Kaliningrad's territory.

"Given its enclave status we certainly recognize the need for special methods of administration ... but their conception of the law will have to be reworked," says Nikolai Kartsev, an official with the Parliament's Committee on Inter-Republican Relations, Regional Policy, and Cooperation.

"We're working with a very delicate problem," Mr. Kartsev continues. "This law could create a precedent for the individualization of legislation."

Rather than granting autonomy, Kartsev says, Moscow could also develop Kaliningrad's economic potential by increasing federal allocations to the region.

Kaliningrad officials welcome federal contributions, but add that the greater decisionmaking powers are nevertheless required.

"We must decide a lot of questions with our neighbors across the border [Poland and Lithuania]. It would be better ... for these questions to be solved here, on the spot," says Leonid Kokotkun, deputy chairman of the Kaliningrad Regional Legislature.

One key to passage of the law rests in Kaliningrad's ability to convince Moscow that the region will not use the legislation to pursue a separate way out of Russia's economic crisis.

"Our goal isn't just to survive, but to help Russia survive," says Oleg Mikhailov, deputy chairman of Kaliningrad's Free Economic Zone Development Committee. "But for now [authorities in Moscow] don't trust us completely."

Recent developments have helped boost trust. For example, deputy administration chief Toropov praised the Russian Foreign Ministry for closer coordination with Kaliningrad in dealings with the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Despite such improvements, the relationship faces a test in the coming weeks, as the effort to promulgate a new constitution intensifies.

Toropov and others say the devolution of power from Moscow to the regions, envisioned in the Federation Treaty, must be part of the new constitution. Otherwise, some areas would be forced to pursue separatist policies.

"The erosion of central power isn't just a possibility, but an absolute necessity," he says. "And the Federation Treaty is the most important document for preserving the stability and integrity of Russia."

After Danes Say 'Yes' Britain Likely To Back Euro-Unity Treaty

Government focuses on setting European agenda as Conservative critics deflated

By Alexander MacLeod
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

LONDON

DENMARK'S "yes" vote in the Maastricht referendum has cut the ground from under the treaty's critics in Britain and has put John Major's government on course to secure its ratification, probably by July.

The prime minister, whose position at times appeared threatened by months of bickering about the treaty inside the ruling Conservative Party, claimed yesterday that parliamentary "trench warfare" was virtually at an end.

Last June's Danish referendum vote against Maastricht encouraged former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her supporters to oppose the treaty when the government introduced a ratification bill last autumn. In the House of Commons last November, the government came within three votes of defeat by a combination of opposition Labour Party and Conservative anti-Maastricht parliamentarians.

The Danes' decisive change of mind has, according to a senior Conservative backbencher, "taken the wind out of the anti-Maastricht campaign," and "robbed them of one of their most persuasive arguments."

There is widespread acceptance, however, that passage of the treaty will not end arguments about Britain's future relations with the European Community.

All main political parties have said that high unemployment in Europe must be tackled as a top priority.

Sir Edward Heath, who in 1972 led Britain into the EC, said: "We can now get down to Europe's real agenda." The former Conservative premier added: "Our young people know they are Europeans. They know Maastricht is a signpost to their future."

Mr. Major yesterday told colleagues that he expects Queen Elizabeth to sign the treaty into law by July.

A favorable third reading vote, in which the Labour opposition plans to abstain, was expected in the House of Commons today. The Maastricht bill will then go to the House of Lords where Mrs. Thatcher has said she will lead a last-ditch attempt to have the treaty legislation rejected.

BUT Major appeared to capture the mood of most Conservatives when he greeted the Danish result with the comment: "The sooner we have put this debilitating period behind us, the better it will be for British business and British prosperity."

He added, however, that he still had "serious differences with several European leaders about the pace of change in Europe."

Disputes inside the Conservative Party about Maastricht have at times severely eroded Major's authority.

In the spring, when argument was at its most intense, he promised that the Maastricht bill would not go to a third reading in the Commons until the Danes had voted a second time. He let it be known that Danish rejection would kill the British legislation.

Sir David Steel, foreign affairs spokesman for the opposition Liberal Democrats, called for "concentration now on reducing European unemployment and getting the economies of EC countries on the move again."

The opposition Labour Party intends to go on pressing the government to accept the treaty 's social charter and its guarantees of workers' rights.

John Smith, the party leader, said that Major, by resisting the social charter, was set to turn Britain into "the sweat-shop of Europe."

Although Major's hand has been strengthened by the Danish vote, he will have to tread warily in coming months. Senior Conservatives have warned him that he will lose their support if he attempts to take Britain back into the exchange-rate mechanism of the European monetary system which it left last September.

ECONOMY

Reform's Slow Pace Ruffles Ukraine Economy

Inflation rises, output drops as new nation prints money, separates itself from Russia

Daniel Sneider
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
and Chrystyna Lapychak
KIEV, UKRAINE

THE starkest sign of the economic woes of this former Soviet republic is the rising value of Russia's ruble, battered and more worthless by the day in Moscow, against the Ukrainian karbovanets.

When Ukraine first introduced its own currency two years ago, in the early days of establishing independence, one karbovanets bought more than one ruble. Today, at the Ukrainian National Bank exchange rate, a ruble costs more than four karbovanets.

The strength of the ruble is less about any success of Russia's reforms than Ukraine's decision to try a slow road to the market economy. Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma basically acknowledged that earlier this week when he asked the Ukrainian parliament to extend his government's special powers to decree economic reforms and to give the government more authority by placing the central bank under his control.

"Our country needs strong executive power and support from the parliament. We must put an end to the period of chaos and vagueness," Mr. Kuchma told the legislature, a body still dominated by former Communists representing huge state-run factories and collective farms.

The parliament has frequently frustrated even Kuchma's moderate reform proposals, using its right to veto his decrees. The parliament and the National Bank have also pumped huge subsidies into the state sector.

Kuchma presented a reform program, including agrarian and banking reforms, privatization, trade liberalization, anti-inflation measures, and introduction of a convertible currency.

The contrast between Ukraine and Russia provides plentiful evidence of the need to speed reforms here. The torrent of commercial activity that flows through Moscow, from the kiosks filled with foreign goods to entrepreneurs in their flashy Mercedes, is a mere trickle in Kiev. The presence of foreign companies, while growing, is a fraction of what Russia attracts.

Where tens of thousands of enterprises have been sold into private hands in Russia, Ukraine has privatized only 68 small enterprises. While Russian reformers freed most prices from state control, prices remain regulated in Ukraine and state-run enterprises enjoy extensive advantages.

Ukraine has "done nothing to create a friendly environment for entrepreneurship," says Greta Bull, an American economist who has been here three years.

This is a painful reality for Ukrainians, who earnestly believed that once they were freed from Moscow's greedy grasp they would enjoy relative prosperity based upon the country's abundant agricultural and natural wealth and its powerful industrial base. In their imaginings, Ukraine would quickly resume its destiny as a great European nation, 55 million strong, turning its back on the former Soviet Union.

Instead Ukraine's economy has performed even worse than Russia's. Inflation is running faster, peaking at 50 percent a month in December and now at about 30 percent. Economic output is down 10 percent from last year.

ROBERT HARBISON – STAFF/FILE

A FABRIC MILL IN KHERSON: *The economy has been unraveling in the Ukraine as former communists block rapid reforms. The government is only now moving toward large-scale privatization of state-run enterprises.*

And Ukraine is bracing for yet another shock – Russia plans to significantly increase the cost of vital supplies of oil and gas to close to world levels. Ukraine is dependent on Russia for 90 percent of its oil and 60 percent of its gas. The move would "kill the economy," Ms. Bull warns.

Depending upon their political persuasion, Ukrainians find different sources for their troubles. The nationalist and democratic groups blame continued dependence on Russia and the resistance to reform from the former Communist bureaucracy whose representatives still dominate the parliament. The former Communists, for their part, point to a policy of isolation from Russia and a breakdown of the old, state-run industrial order.

The only point of agreement is an almost universal criticism of Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk for having ceded responsibility to the government. Unlike Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Mr. Kravchuk is uninvolved in running the administration. "The President should be a leader and not just stand aside," says Taras Stetskiv,a top adviser to Kuchma advisor and a deputy in parliament.

BUT many Western analysts here see the current crisis as a consequence of the failed policy, supported by all political forces, of trying to insulate Ukraine from Russia's economic turmoil and pursue a slower path to reform. The introduction of the karbonovets, for example, was initially a temporary measure intended to protect Ukraine from Russian inflation and block Russians from buying up Ukrainian goods whose prices were kept under control. The interim currency was to be replaced by a real, internally convertible currency.

At the same time, the Ukrainian government thought it could avoid the collapse of production that Russia has faced by retaining state control over its enterprises. But the inter-dependence of Russian and Ukrainian economies and enterprises made it impossible to avoid inflation and a collapse in production.

The Ukrainian government essentially recognized this mistake when Mr. Kuchma, the former manager of a giant missile plant, was named prime minister last October. Kuchma brought some reform figures into the cabinet, including from the nationalist Rukh movement, and got parliament to grant the government special powers for six months.

But initial hopes that reforms would take off have met with frustration. "We expected more from the government," says Rukh leader Vyacheslav Chornovil, who supports a faster shift to the free-market. He points to the activity of the former communist bureaucracy in blocking reforms at the local level and in the parliament. But he also is critical of the Kuchma government for yielding to this pressure, as evidenced in the forced resignation of reform Vice Premier Igor Yukhnovsky in March and the downgrading in April of the power of Viktor Pinzenik, the vice premier for economic reform.

"I agree that during this half year we didn't have tangible results," acknowledges Kuchma advisor Stetskiv, but he promises that an extension of power will bring new reformers to the government. Privatization and taking on inflation are the government's priorities, he says.

The main obstacle to privatization, as in Russia, are the powerful directors of state enterprises, as well as local administrations, which actively oppose it, Stetskiv explains. But he also admits that Kuchma, who comes from those ranks, "was vacillating until March."

As for anti-inflation, the Prime Minister's advisor places sole responsibility for failure on the National Bank. Bank chairman Viktor Yushchenko, who opposes the move to place the bank under the government's control, blamed the government for the credit flow. "Everyone wants the market and everyone wants subsidies to get there," he told parliament earlier this week.

While the government claims to want to curb spending, even reformists are fearful of triggering mass unemployment by allowing state-run firms to go fold.

China Still Exports Prison-Made Goods

WASHINGTON

CHINA is still exporting prison-made goods to the United States, a human rights group announced. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration is struggling toward a policy on trade with Beijing.

The Laogai Research Foundation said an investigation revealed that the Chinese government was trying to cloak the practice by changing the names of prison factories, opening sales offices, changing product brand names, and integrating prison enterprises with legitimate businesses.

"The Chinese government has always lied about the 'laogai' products. They are lying still," said Harry Wu, a Chinese-American executive at the foundation who spent 19 years in the Chinese reform-through-labor prison system.

President Clinton has until June 3 to announce whether he will renew China's Most-Favored Nation trade status for another year, or whether he will link future renewal to an improved record in human rights, weapons proliferation, and unfair trade practices.

Four members of Congress, all proponents of putting conditions on China's trade status, attended Mr. Wu's news conference, saying they deplored China's apparent violation of US law barring imports of prison-made goods.

– Associated Press

Supercomputers Take Aim At Broader Business Markets

By Laurent Belsie
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ST. PAUL, MINN.

IF today's corporations are downsizing – moving from large mainframe computers to networks of smaller, desktop machines – tomorrow's corporations may do exactly the opposite.

Many computer companies are betting that businesses in the next three to five years will start using machines that are bigger and faster than mainframes. These machines are called supercomputers. New technologies may push the supercomputer out from its small niche in laboratories and universities to a much bigger market of business applications.

"Two things have to happen for it to really hit the prime time," says Jeff Canin, a supercomputer analyst for Solomon Brothers. First, big companies have to commit to building new types of computers. Second, "the software sector [has] to catch up with the hardware."

The first trend is already taking place. Major-league players such as IBM, Convex in conjunction with Hewlett-Packard, NCR, and other big computermakers are moving to build new kinds of high-end machines. Meanwhile, companies that build workstations, such as Silicon Graphics, are pushing their technolgy into this high-end market niche.

"All the big players will have their toe in the market," says Gary Smaby, president of his own computer-industry advisory firm in Minneapolis. This is stirring up the supercomputer market as never before.

"It's going to be a real fight," adds Christopher Willard, manager of high-performance technology for international Data Corporation, a market research firm in Framingham, Mass. "It's kind of like a game of musical chairs. There aren't enough seats for everybody."

Nowhere is the promise – and turmoil – of this new market clearer than here in Minnesota where Cray Research Inc. is changing its focus. Cray Research is the world's leading supercomputer maker. It continues to build traditional high-end machines called Vector computers. These have one or more superfast chips specifically designed to handle challenging technical problems typically found in laboratories or universities.

But Cray is also broadening its line to try to take advantage of the new technologies. Last year, it began selling entry-level supercomputers that have sold well. These machines could compete with the workstation companies that are tyring to push their technology into the low-end of this high-performance computing market. But Cray is spending even more to create new machines around a technology called massively parallel processing, or MPP.

On paper, MPP looks very powerful. Instead of trying to bypass the laws of physics with one superfast chip, MPP allows manufacturers to string together hundreds, even thousands, of microprocessors to tackle a problem. These machines could have great advantages. They are cheaper to build and they are scalable. That means that if companies have to tackle a hard problem that is beyond the capapbility of their supercomputer, they would not have to buy a new machine. With MPP, they could just add more microprocessors.

MPP machines have already proved themselves in certain special categories of problems.

"If they worked for high-performance aircraft, can we use them for more mundane industries – cooking meatballs in a can, designing golf clubs?" asks Mr. Willard. "There are a lot more people who are interested in a well-cooked meatball than will ever kick the tires of a high-performance aircraft."

Some of the vendors building MPP machines believe this architecture will take over the industry. "All larger computers in the not-too-distant future are going to be based on the highly parallel architecture," says Bob Rockwell, executive vice president of marketing for Kendall Square Research Corporation in Waltham, Mass. "If you believe that, then everyone will be our competitor."

In practice, however, MPP has proved very difficult to implement. With one exception, off-the-shelf software doesn't yet exist to break up a problem so that many processors can work on it at the same time.

"We have got to get over this chicken and egg question," of non-existant software, says Martin Walker, director of Cray's parallel applications.

The company is linking up developers and potential end-users in a formal program to create new software using Cray's upcoming MPP machines. The company says it will ship its first MPP units this fall.

ROBERT HARBISON – STAFF/FILE

CRAY SUPERCOMPUTER: *Many computer companies like Cray Research are betting that in the next few years the supercomputer will move out from its small niche into a bigger market of business applications.*

OIL TAX HIKES

Energy-Tax Proposals Put Squeeze on OPEC Profits

By John Dillin
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

OPEC is over a barrel.

Proposals to boost energy taxes in Europe and the United States threaten future profits for the once-powerful Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. The OPEC cartel, which includes Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, and nine other major producers, pumps nearly 40 percent of the world's oil.

Higher taxes could upset OPEC's long-range production plans, lower crude-oil prices, and drain billions of dollars of income from the petroleum giants.

Consumer nations, including the US, see oil as a potential gusher of tax revenues. They predict higher taxes will also reduce consumption, protect the environment, and cut dependence on imports. In April, the US imported more than half its daily oil supplies, mostly from OPEC nations.

President Clinton has proposed billions in new taxes that would hit petroleum harder than coal, natural gas, and other forms of energy. The taxes, which still must get through a skeptical Congress, would boost prices by $3.50 per barrel of oil, or about 9 cents on a gallon of gasoline.

Last month, 11 of the 12 members of the European Community (EC) called for a new carbon tax, which would amount to $3 on a barrel of oil and rise to $10 by 2000. Only Britain, itself a major oil producer, was opposed.

All this leaves OPEC with little room for maneuver – and a growing threat to its own revenues.

Although OPEC was blamed by many Americans in the 1970s and '80s for gasoline shortages and sky-high prices, the cartel has followed a policy of restraint in recent years.

With the oil-rich Saudis taking the lead, OPEC has attempted to keep petroleum supplies reliable, and stabilize prices within a "moderate" range of $18 to $22 a barrel. This week, West Texas crude, a benchmark oil, was selling for $19.50.

If the US and Europe add $3 to $10 a barrel in new taxes to OPEC prices, however, demand could drop, prices could weaken, and OPEC profits could decline.

Joseph Stanislaw, managing director of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, says that unlike a few years ago, OPEC now finds itself with few attractive options.

Competition among the world's oil producers has become fierce. The Saudis, Kuwait, and Iran are all jockeying for larger shares of OPEC's daily output of more than 26 million barrels of petroleum. If taxes rise, OPEC might be able to stabilize its prices, and protect profits, by cutting production. But which OPEC country would volunteer to sell less oil?

Meanwhile, there is the problem of Iraq. Although currently boycotted by most of the world's nations, Iraq stands ready to pour another 3 million barrels a day into world markets. If the boycott ends, it could threaten worldwide oil-price stability.

Some OPEC nations complain that their most important commodity is being singled out unfairly for special punishment, and exploitation, by the world's industrialized nations. They also protest that oil's detrimental effects on the environment are being exaggerated, especially when compared to coal, which often wins favorable treatment in Europe and the US.

In a report on OPEC's problems, Dr. Stanislaw quotes Hisham Nazer, Saudi minister of petroleum and mineral resources, who says: "Oil has been made the culprit. Oil has been taxed far in excess of any contributon it may have in environmental degradation." Consumer countries suffer from "petrophobia," he says.

Even before Washington and the EC act, smaller units of government are boosting oil taxes.

Since mid-1991, Germany has boosted gasoline taxes by 70 cents a gallon, and the government there wants another 30-cent rise in 1994. Other gas-tax increases since mid-1991 include Austria (49 cents a gallon), Belgium (53 cents), Denmark (26 cents), Finland (40 cents), France (23 cents), Greece ($1.02), Ireland (23 cents), the Netherlands (76 cents), Portugal (38 cents), and Switzerland (55 cents).

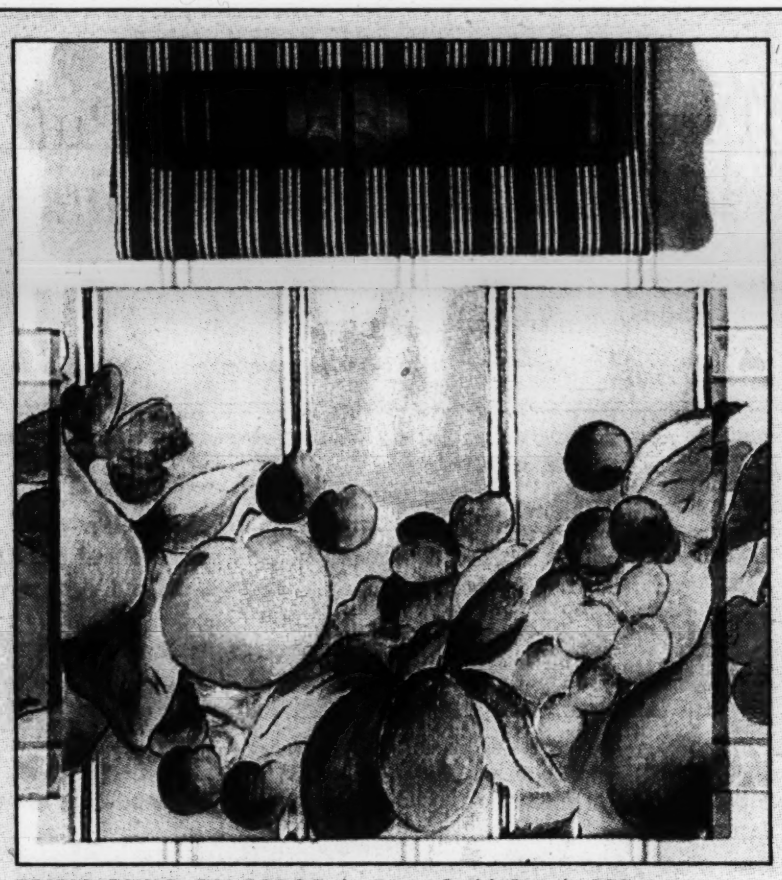
In the US, individual states have also hiked taxes, though by an average of only 1 cent. The highest increase came in New York, up 7 cents.

DESIGN

A Feel for LOCALE

Home-decorating books often double as travelogues, focusing on a particular region or country and its living style. Three new books offer striking examples.

Notes by Kirsten A. Conover – staff



TRICIA GUILD ON COLOR, *by Tricia Guild (Rizzoli, 192 pp., $37.50.)* The designer organizes her book with sections on seven distinct color palettes (white, blue, green, yellow, natural, terracotta, and red), which she treats in the context of nature, art, science, and history. Shown here are apple-green fabric swatches and wall covering, which are an example of subtle variations in a rustic design.

Tips for Learning Color Intuition

INTERVIEW

TO interior designer Tricia Guild, color is "the ultimate expression of vitality."

Ms. Guild founded the London-based Designers Guild, which creates fabrics, wallpapers, and accessories for home design, many of which are featured in her book – part color celebration, part color study, and part company catalog. The book's photographs, taken by David Montgomery, are so vivid and appealing that you can look at them time and time again.

"People are becoming much more interested in color," Guild said during a phone interview from New York. "But at the same time they are hesitant. It's like a language; people are very nervous about using it, although they want to."

Why do other cultures seem to be more in tune with color than say, in North America? "It's part of their daily life," Guild observes. "It's more instinctive to them," she says, offering her observations of colorful dress in India, Central America, and the Caribbean, for example. "You see color mixtures that indicate a purer intuitive feeling."

In Western countries, the lack of bright color in office buildings and homes may have do with people's concern about "what's good taste" and so they do what's safe, most conservative, rather than what's most stimulating, Guild says. "It's much more boring to live with cream all the time ... it's really not too stimulating.... It's when you fall back on that, you don't have soul there to use pink, yellow, bright green."

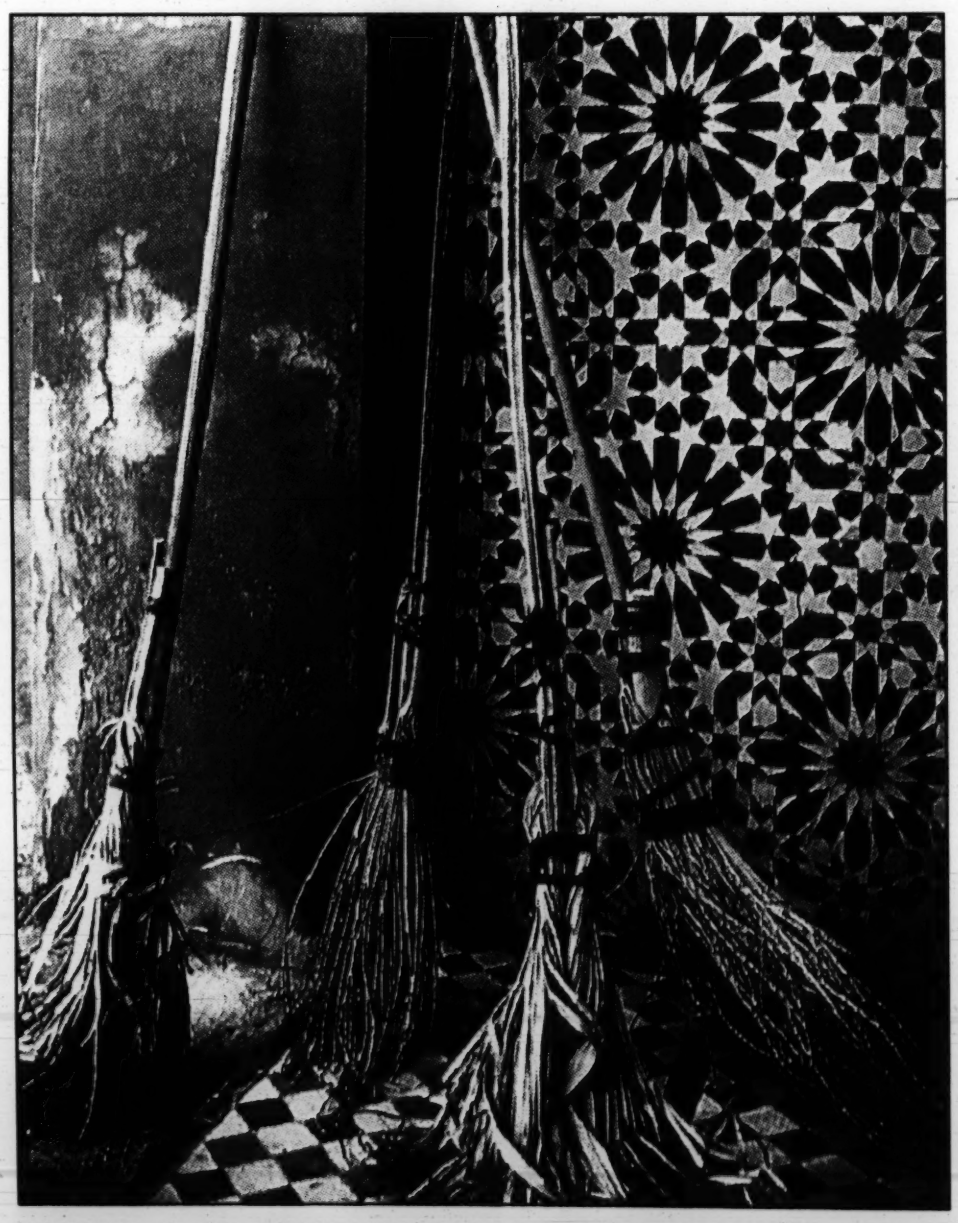
As a designer, Guild knows that everyone has different responses to colors. "It's a very personal thing. You definitely have to understand about a person and find out about their color sensibilities."

Few people are born with an instinctive talent for using color, Guild maintains. It is a learned skill, where feeling rules over formula.

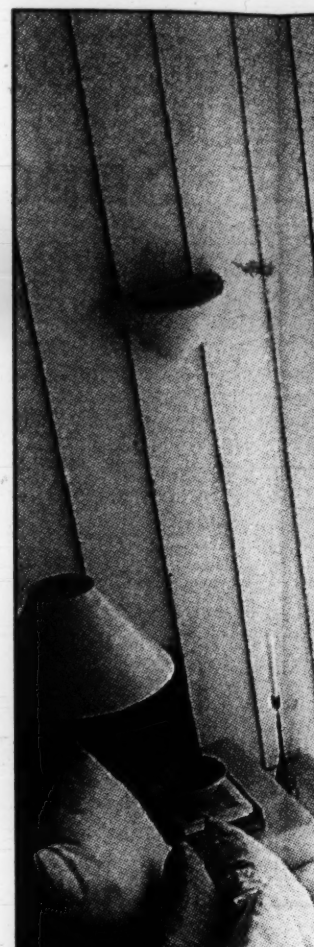
For anyone interested in exploring color, Guild suggests merely looking around – with a color consciousness. The best thing for people to do is start collecting examples that please them, she says: "making a scrapbook of things you really like, things you really like looking at; and finally getting groups [combinations] together." Tear out pages of magazines, keep samples, make collages. When you arrive at a group, keep looking at it and keep looking back at it to become familiar and more selective, she says.

"From there you become a little more confident and color becomes more exciting, actually."

– Kirsten A. Conover



MOROCCO: DESIGN FROM CASABLANCA TO MARRAKESH, *photographs and text by Lisl and Landt Dennis (Clarkson Potter, 247 pp., $45).* The couple's book gives a pungent taste of Morocco's culture: a mix of influences that include Arab, French, English, and Spanish. Photographs show details of pottery, leather, rugs, and textiles. Pictured above, wall tiles from the 16th-century Saadian tombs.



CALIFORNIA COUNTRY, *photographed by John Vaughan, written by Diane Dorrans Saeks (Chronicle Books, 204 pp., $35).* This tour of interior design, architecture, and style starts in California's wine country, then visits the lake area, the coast, hill country, and "town and country." The homes celebrate the natural beauty and consistent indoor-outdoor harmony for which the state is known.

SCOTTISH COUNTRY, *by Charles Maclean and Christopher Simon Sykes (Clarkson Potter, 240 pp., $45).* This book travels the entire isle, offering a look at homes that give Scotland its majestic and mystical character. The author takes great care to provide historical background, complete with legends and lore. Sections include gardens, painted ceilings, tartan, tweed, fishing, pottery, tower houses, and pigeon cotes.

The Customer Is Always Writing

TWO friends who meet once a year for lunch always celebrate at the same restaurant in an upscale hotel. They like the ambience – crisp table linens, fresh flowers, pleasant music – and the attentive service.

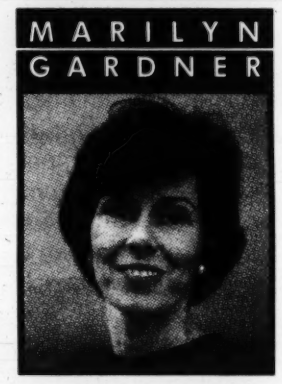
But this year they noticed something decidedly downscale: Heavy white mugs, more appropriate for a pancake house than a pricey restaurant, had replaced the usual china cups and saucers. When they expressed dismay, the waiter nodded understandingly. "A lot of people have complained," he said.

Then he urged the women to fill out a customer-comment card. "The managers don't necessarily listen to us," he explained. "But they *always* read the comment cards."

From restaurants and motels to stores and airlines, executives everywhere are soliciting opinions from those whose patronage they depend on. Their requests have become the corporate equivalent of the question made famous by New York's former Mayor Ed Koch, who delighted in asking, "How'm I doing?"

At Bloomingdale's, tall ballot boxes placed near exits are painted with the pleading words, "Talk To Us." Cards stacked on top carry the same request, adding, "We're all ears."

In packages of one brand of stockings, a large card makes an urgent request: "Hanes Women – Speak Your Mind!" The form invites customers to join the company's new "Quality Control Panel as our consultant," then concludes, "Be it compliments or complaints, we want to know, because we'd rather make a change than have you make a change."



Even Boston's airport is putting on consumer-friendly airs. "Please take a moment to tell us how you feel about Logan," a survey card reads. It asks travelers to rate 15 aspects of the facility, from "Roadway Signs to the Terminals" to "Public Information Booth Assistance."

To these, add the toll-free consumer hotlines printed on everything from cereal boxes to toothpaste tubes. Think of the marketing questionnaires that arrive in the mail with a crisp dollar bill attached as an incentive. And don't forget the registration cards accompanying new home appliances – the ones that want to know about everything from your "major activities" to the "most important things in your life." The evidence is unmistakable: A conscientious consumer could spend hours playing unpaid market researcher.

By giving customers an authoritative voice, these corporate information-seekers appear to be making a thoughtful, service-oriented gesture. The report cards they receive may, in fact, represent one of the few places where grade inflation doesn't exist. A time-short shopper who has waited in one too many long checkout lines – or been ignored by one too many indifferent clerks – is hardly apt to offer an A when performance rates a C.

Yet could it be that what passes for corporate solicitude is often a marketing tool in disguise? Big Brother Retailer or Manufacturer wants you – and your ZIP code, and as much personal and demographic information as you're willing to divulge. Survey questions have become increasingly nosy: "How old are you? How much do you make?" One friend says he's sometimes tempted to list his age as 13 and his income as $200,000, just to keep market researchers humble.

Can anybody complain because "service" has become the mantra intoned by all kinds of merchandisers? So why not fill out one more questionnaire, participate in one more telephone interview until marketing researchers know more about customers than their mothers ever did?

The trouble is, customers don't all want one and the same thing, to be defined by a simple check mark in a single survey box. Furthermore, after going to all that expense to discover the consumer's opinion, businesses will sometimes ignore their polls, trusting their own judgment ahead of those votes that would automate the motto: "The customer is always right."

Willy-nilly, providers and customers continue to engage in an unpredictable guessing game with one another, making marketing still an art as well as a science. Perhaps that's for the best – even though, as of this week, those providers of inelegant mugs have not yet acknowledged their sputtering sippers' protests in support of china cups.

FOOD

Superb French Fare Without Pretense

Paris bistro L'Assiette appeals to the haute-cuisine set for its imaginative dishes, rooted in rural traditions

By Christopher Andreae
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

PARIS

"BRAVO!" cries Lucette Rousseau, voice piping enthusiastically. The small wiry chef and owner of one of Paris's exceptional bistros, "Lulu" is all outspoken energy. Her speech outstrips the speed of light.

Fortunately, an English-speaking friend translates for us. Apart from "Bravo!" my limited French catches only words like "mille francs!" (price of a turbot she displays to demonstrate the high cost of the products she uses) or "unique! unique! unique!" – to describe a plump pigeon from Landes in southwest France, a specialty of hers. She, too, is from the southwest, from a farm family in a village near Pau, an area once called Béarn. This part of France has long been known for good food. Her menus are handwritten and reflect her roots: *Gigot d'agneau de lait des Pyrénées*, for instance, or *Boudin des Landes en parmentier*. From her homeland, too, comes the assortment of her berets, one of them always on her head.

Her "Bravo!" is prompted by my suggestion that L'Assiette (at which notably rich and beautiful people eat) has an ambience that is scarcely "snob." This pleases her to no end. *"Ah,"* (our interpreter interprets) "she says that it takes someone from abroad to understand her!"

She seems to deliberately contrast what the food magazine Gault Milau recently called her "décor volontairement misérabiliste" with her superb cuisine. Uncomfortable chairs; taped-up crack across the window; unpretentious reception desk by open kitchen door: this might almost be a farmhouse.

From outside, L'Assiette (181 Rue du Chateau), looks like some cheap side-street lunch bar. But this appearance is at odds with both food and clientele. As a coiffured Swiss lady remarked as she and her affluent-looking friends left after their meal: "The food here is *wonderful*."

As we ate, the six patrons at the next table eagerly tasted each others' *Oursins Bretons* with hot scrambled egg or truffles *fraîches* with winter vegetables. Behind us a foursome was greeted by Lulu.

Meanwhile our table cooed softly as everyone forked into my starter: *Rillettes de Maquereaux* **(see recipe, page 13).** Consensus: It was out of this world. I popped in my mouth one of the dark cherries embellishing the mackerel and let out a tiny yelp. Later I learned that these cherries in vinegar are a Lulu invention dating back to 1973. Piquant, surprising, unique.

One thing's certain: This determined little sparrow of a chef – a woman in a profession dominated by males – has no doubt why her clientele keep coming back. It's for her food.

Her food amounts to an extraordinary paradox. It exists at some rarely achieved point of culinary imaginativeness where home-cooking and *haute-cuisine* meet and cross.

OWEN FRANKEN

LUCETTE ROUSSEAU: *Known simply as 'Lulu,' the vivacious chef and bistro owner has been cooking professionally in her native France since age 14.*

Its roots are in what she learned from her mother feeding a family of 10. "Now I just multiply that by five!" she says. What she understood at home was how to appreciate "good fresh things" and "how to cook rapidly."

A professional cook from age 14 (she's now 43), serving time in a number of great Parisian restaurants, her philosophy still stems from her background: First, "Know how to buy everything of very good quality;" then subject it to "the best cooking." Every other night she buys produce at the large Rungis market, south of the city. Cooking it, she advocates "simplicity" and "professionalism."

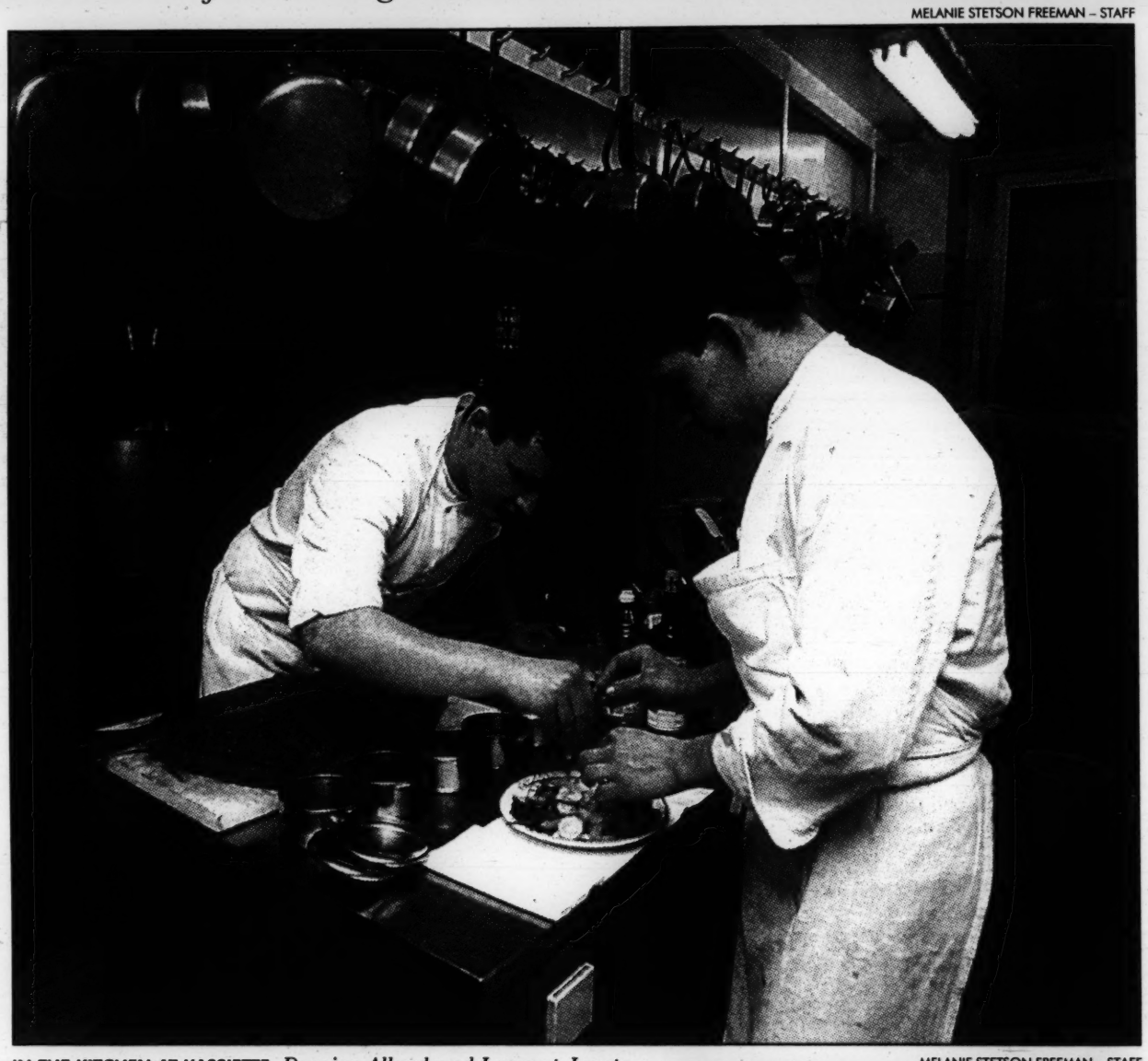
She does not cook with sauces. Plain, good ingredients have their own delicious and subtle flavors. If this sounds like the nouvelle cuisine of the 1980s, that is not the result for several reasons.

One is that Lulu has no apparent objection to the full plate: she doesn't place intricate decorativeness above good all-over food (though presentation is still scrupulous). Another is that she is quite capable of introducing dishes based in rural tradition – like her *Boudin des Landes en parmentier*. Even among her rich desserts can be found a vernacular oddity, which has proved popular: apple crumble. She "learned it from an English friend." Clearly this wholesome commonplace of English home cookery has a certain I-don't-know-what for L'Assiette's clientele.

To show how she exploits natural tastes rather than disguising them with sauces, she waves a bunch of tiny carrots at us: "mini-vegetables." When they were first marketed she was against them, thinking them faddish and expensive, she says. But when she tasted some, she was converted. They had flavors going back to her childhood. As a child she had often nibbled the carrot thinnings and little cauliflowers that were just considered wastage, feed for livestock. They had a sweet, fresh taste unlike mature vegetables – and just like the new "mini-vegetables." Today she enjoys the irony of these being now so fashionable, when "20 years ago they were what we threw to the pigs."

My main course was *Magret de canard gras cuit entier*. Completely unfussed, it was delectable in every mouthful. No extras – just succulent, crispy-skinned "steak" of duck, sliced. And potatoes. This magret is a specialty of the southwest. The potatoes, washed in salt and cooked for two hours in a copper pan in the oven with a little oil and a lot of garlic are the most toothsome potatoes imaginable. They are a special, regional, French kind: *Ratte de Noirmoutier*, grown by the seashore. They may sound ordinary, but at Chez Lulu they are unforgettable.

MELANIE STETSON FREEMAN – STAFF



IN THE KITCHEN AT L'ASSIETTE: *Damien Allard and Laurent Janot prepare Coquilles Saint Jacques en Blanquette et Légumes (scallops in white sauce with vegetables, see dish at right).*

MELANIE STETSON FREEMAN – STAFF

FILM

Cannes Festival screenings underscore the contrast between English-language films and those made in continental Europe and Asia

When Subtle Outweighs Strident

By David Sterritt
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

CANNES, FRANCE

MY theory about film festivals is like Leo Tolstoy's theory about wars. The people who organize them like to regard them as models of strategy and order – but the people who actually participate in them often find them more crazy and confused than coherent and comprehensible.

That goes double for a gigantic event like the Cannes International Film Festival, where so many movies and personalities are vying for attention that the hardest part of a critic's day may be shuffling through the latest mound of schedules, invitations, and press releases to figure out which combination of activities will have the most productive results.

Some contenders are easy to reject, of course , since they'd be boring or irrelevant under any circumstances.

Yet there's always a handful of tantalizing films or interviews that just can't be squeezed into my datebook – which is frustrating in itself, and inevitably makes me wonder if I might have spotted the next major cinematic trend if I'd just chosen Item A instead of Item B on that particular occasion.

As of this writing, a week into the 46th annual Cannes extravaganza, my colleagues and I generally agree that no significant new trends have leapt into view despite the enormous amount of material we've been sifting, scrutinizing, and assessing.

What does seem clear is that the traditional dividing line between English-language cinema and films from other parts of the world is firmly in place as the 1990s head toward their midpoint.

Pictures from Hollywood and England have been bursting onto the screen with an energy that's as disconcerting as it is aggressive, while movies from Asia and continental Europe have been enticing audiences with quieter and subtler approaches. This doesn't mean the latter films are better than the former ones, but they do tend to be more dignified and demanding in some ways.

The opening-night movie, Andre Téchiné's romantic **My Favorite Season,** provided a good example of this. Although it was unveiled with star-studded hoopla amid a crush of cameras, reporters, and stargazers, it turned out to be a comparatively restrained drama that raises the possibility of daring and controversial plot twists only to divert them into a refreshing affirmation of conventional values.

The main characters are members of a French family that has been split by a series of minor quarrels, feuds, and misunderstandings.

When the oldest member's illness brings the others into unusual proximity with one another and a couple of outsiders, the screenplay begins steering toward what might become kinky situations (a homosexual fling, an incestuous relationship) that never materialize, since the people involved are perfectly content to channel their affections into respectable behaviors.

"My Favorite Season" would have more impact if it were filmed more modestly – one wonders why Mr. Téchiné chose a showy, wide-screen format for such a muted tale – and if a few dull stretches were edited out. Its mellowness is appealing, though, and it serves up expressive performances by such superb stars as Catherine Deneuve and Daniel Auteuil.

Mellowness is carried even further in the newest film by Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, now in his 80s and still vigorously practicing his art. Covering a long period beginning about 50 years ago, **Madadayo** is the story of a revered teacher as he is seen and remembered by former students whose lives and ideas he profoundly influenced.

Mellowness is carried further in the newest film by Japan's Akira Kurosawa. Covering a period beginning about 50 years ago, 'Madadayo' is the story of a revered teacher as he is remembered by former students whose lives and ideas he influenced.

Unfortunately, this two-hour-plus drama has enough dull spots – talky speeches, unfunny jokes, painfully slow story developments – to drive unreceptive spectators out of the theater long before it's over; this happened at the Cannes screening I attended, and I was also tempted to make an early exit when the narrative threatened to bog down altogether on a few occasions.

But, in the end, Mr. Kurosawa's blend of sincerity and tenacity kept me in my seat, and I'm glad I witnessed his late-career testament to the qualities of wisdom, humor, and integrity that the hero of his film exemplifies.

No such restraint is visible in the English-language pictures that generated the most talk during the festival's early days. In the starkly titled **Naked,** renowned British filmmaker Mike Leigh – who received international praise for "High Hopes" and "Life Is Sweet," his two previous movies – serves up a ferociously dark view of contemporary British life, focusing on the adventures of a young drifter who recognizes no kind of love or caring except for violent, voracious sexuality.

The movie would be simply repellent if not for three ingredients.

One is the brilliance of Mr. Leigh's visual style.

Another is the acting of David Thewlis, who gives one of the most virtuosic performances I've seen in years.

The third is Leigh's challenging screenplay, which suggests that the abhorrent traits of the film's characters are results of life in an avaricious society that produces psychological ills and misery along with unequal wealth and repetitive jobs.

These aspects don't make Leigh's film easy to assimilate, but they do make it hard to shake off.

A somewhat similar subtext runs through Abel Ferrara's melodrama **Body Snatchers.** The story uses a venerable science-fiction notion – that alien invaders are threatening to turn humanity into a herd of zombies with no minds or souls of their own – to indict everything from toxic waste to military training and suburban architecture.

Filmed with impressive control and economy, the movie pitches out its ideas more eagerly than it proves or explores them.

As a thriller, it's as scary as they come, however, and its attack on conformity is as worth pondering today as in 1956 and 1978, when Hollywood turned out earlier versions of the yarn.

"Body Snatchers" is not a subtle movie, but it has captured a much larger share of Cannes's attention than many of its more dignified competitors have managed to do so far.

ERIC GAILLARD/REUTERS

A WAVE FOR THE PAPARAZZI: *Catherine Deneuve and Daniel Auteuil, the French stars of Andre Téchiné's film, 'My Favorite Season,' take a photo call after the movie's première screening at Cannes.*

RILLETTES DE MAQUEREAUX

(spread of minced mackerel)

L'Assiette restaurant owner Lucette (Lulu) Rousseau serves these hors d'oeuvres with her special recipe for cherries in vinegar.

Our chosen recipe for pickled cherries (below) would also complement the flavor of the rillettes. Or they could simply be served on crackers, with pickles.

2 tablespoons butter
2 shallots, chopped
4 tablespoons cream
3 lb. mackerel fillets
Salt and pepper to taste
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Melt butter, add shallots, and cook until translucent. Add cream, bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer until mixture becomes thick, about 3 minutes. Steam or poach mackerel until soft, about 4 to 5 minutes. Cool and remove skin.

Stir fish to break up into small pieces or shreds. Add shallots-and-cream mixture, salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Mix well with wooden spoon, taste for seasonings.

Press into lightly greased mold, 5-inch ramekin, or custard cups and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. Makes 2 cups, serving 4 to 6.

PICKLED CHERRIES

1 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup red wine vinegar
1 cinnamon stick
2 cups Bing cherries, pitted

Combine first four ingredients and bring to a boil. Add cherries (height of season in California is mid-April; in the Northwest mid-June) and heat until syrup almost gets to the boil again, then remove from heat and cool. Makes about 2-1/2 cups.

– 'Rillettes' adapted from recipe by Lucette Rousseau as it appeared in FashionEurope magazine (Feb. 1993).

– 'Pickled cherries' adapted from recipe by Joanne Kileen, co-chef and co-owner of Al Forno restaurant in Providence, R.I.

WORTH NOTING ON TV

By Alan Bunce

■ THURSDAY

Mystery! *(PBS, 9-10 p.m.)*: The rumpled "Rumpole of the Bailey" is back with another series of somewhat caustic British humor disguised as law-detective stories. Two men have made the eccentric character popular with viewers in the United States and Britain. One is writer John Mortimer, who has now written seven series of tales about the curmudgeonly barrister. The other is actor Leo McKern, a native Australian, who at 72 is launching his sixth season as the title character in the TV version. In the opener, "Rumpole at Sea," he's seen cruising the Adriatic on a second honeymoon with his wife, Hilda. On the same ship, a certain judge – no favorite of Rumpole's (who is?) – thinks a murder has occurred, and Rumpole proceeds, of course, to solve the mystery.

■ FRIDAY

The Road to Hollywood *(NBC, 8-9 p.m.)*: Their names are so big today that you almost forget they once had to climb to stardom: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sharon Stone, and Eddie Murphy. But each reached the top of the movie world by a different route, and this special traces their respective paths. Interviews supplemented by film clips and personal footage illustrate how Schwarzenegger started as a bodybuilder, Murphy as a searingly funny stand-up comedian on TV's "Saturday Night Live," and Stone as a model.

Great Performances *(PBS, 10-11 p.m.)*: Since its founding in 1987, the American Indian Dance Theatre has been asking a tribal elder from an Indian nation to teach the members of its company a dance from their culture. The result is not only a new dance, but also an expanding network of ties to native American life around the country. It's one of the things documented in "American Dance Theatre: Dances for the New Generation," a study of how Indian dance and music are being reborn in many native American communities. As it profiles dancers from tribes all across North America, the program dramatizes – often through performance – the challenge of conveying the spirit of old dances to new generations.

Please check local listings for all programs, especially those on PBS.

The Land and People Of America's Outback

By Elizabeth Levitan Spaid

TO the majority of Americans who live in urban, suburban, and even many rural communities not too far from larger population centers, the idea of a "contemporary frontier" existing in the United States may seem unlikely. After all, the American frontier was considered closed 100 years ago.

Not so, says Dayton Duncan, author of "Miles From Nowhere: Tales From America's Contemporary Frontier," who packed up his GMC Suburban and headed out to find people in the most remote counties of the US.

These counties, the size of Massachusetts or bigger, boast fewer than two folks per square mile and dot the Western half of the country like Mondrian-shaped splotches on a canvas. They (132 of them, according to the 1990 US Census) make up 13 percent of the nation's land mass – an area "a little larger than everything east of the Mississippi River and north of the Mason-Dixon line." Together, their population totals about 489,000 people – roughly the size of Pittsburgh.

To find this contemporary frontier, Duncan crisscrossed thousands of miles of lonely highways and back roads, where hundred-mile stretches are broken by only one tiny town or outpost.

The stories of the people living in these desolate environs are the most interesting part of his book.

Take Margaret Stafford, an 84-year-old woman who lives by herself on the barren plains of eastern Montana without electricity or running water, 43 miles from the nearest town, Jordan, population 494. Stafford is a peppery individual who had never planned on staying and was appalled at the conditions when she filed for a homestead in Garfield County in 1925. But she married and lived there in a one-room hut with her husband until he left in the 1970s. She goes to Jordan about three times a year but says, "Don't ask me to *stay* in that rotten little burg. Everybody knows everybody else's business. And what's going on with the rest of the world? You tell me. Well, that's why I stay out here."

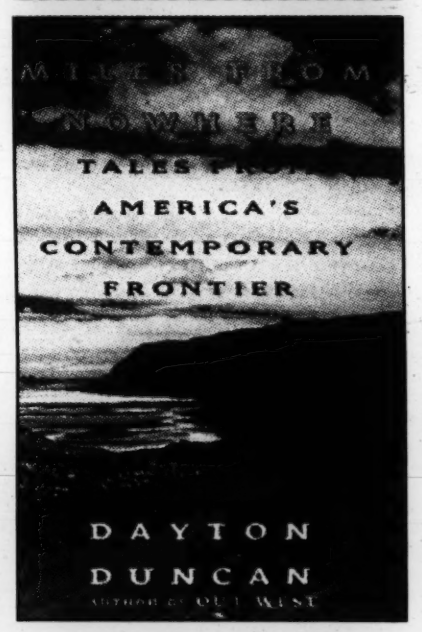
The Old West had ox-drawn wagons that brought mail and supplies. Today, only the mode of transportation has changed. Jerry McComb of Presidio County, Texas, has spent 18 years driving a UPS truck in an area of dusty, arid southwest Texas that the Spanish nicknamed *El Despoblado* – the place without people. McComb spends about 12 hours a day on the road delivering just about everything to an area larger than the state of Connecticut. On his travels, he's had rear wheels fall off, delivered a baby, and had to walk four hours to the nearest telephone, encountering "a few ornery Brahma bulls and some rattlesnakes."

Although many Western cities are a magnet for settlers, many frontier counties continue to lose population. Duncan muses: "The old frontier was seen as the locus of boundless opportunity waiting to be tapped. People went there seeking their fortunes. With a few exceptions, the contemporary frontier is viewed as an economic backwater; what few people are moving in – retirees or 'quality-of-life pioneers' hoping to find a slower pace amidst nice scenery – are usually those who have already made their money. The expectation for a frontier area once was growth; it was a nearly empty place anticipating being filled. Now, it is a nearly empty place worried about becoming emptier; the prognosis most often is for decline."

Through colorful prose and a conversational tone, Duncan vividly brings to life a territory of America unexplored by most people. He weaves in historical anecdotes about Western heroes and villains of the old frontier days. And he tells the stories of modern pioneers – and lets them tell their accounts – in a refreshingly nonjudgmental way.

■ *Elizabeth Levitan Spaid is on the Monitor staff.*

BOOKS



MILES FROM NOWHERE: TALES FROM AMERICA'S CONTEMPORARY FRONTIER
By Dayton Duncan
Viking, 320 pp., $22.50

Polls Show Growth In Religious Belief

NEW research by the Rev. Andrew Greeley, the Roman Catholic sociologist and author, shows belief in God to be stronger than ever in many parts of the Judeo-Christian world, though not in the Netherlands and eastern Germany.

According to Reuters, researchers from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago surveyed almost 19,000 people in Britain, Germany, Hungary, the Irish Republic, Northern Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, and the United States. The study found that substantial majorities of those surveyed in almost all the countries say they believe in God: Nine out of 10 in the US and Irish Republic, 8 out of 10 in Italy, and more than 2 out of 3 in Israel, Britain, and New Zealand. In the Netherlands, the figure was a little more than half, while in eastern Germany, less than 25 percent told pollsters they believe in God.

"In some countries, most notably Ireland ... Poland, and the United States, religious devotion is high, arguably higher than it has ever been in human history," Fr. Greeley writes.

Religion seen gaining in US

Meanwhile, Gallup Poll findings appear to indicate that the percentage of Americans who believe religion is important is on the rise. According to the Princeton Religion Research Center, there has been a slow but steady increase since 1987 in the number of Americans surveyed who say that religion is important in their lives. From a low point of 53 percent in 1987, the percentage rose in 1991 to 58 percent, where it stayed in 1992. But it's still far below the record-high 75 percent of those surveyed in 1952 who said religion was important to them.

Gallup also finds an increase in the percentage of those surveyed who claim to be church members. In 1992, 70 percent of those surveyed said they were church or synagogue members, up from 65 percent in 1990. The highest percentage ever recorded was 76 percent in 1947. Interestingly, the West continues to lag significantly behind the rest of the country, with only 57 percent of those surveyed claiming church membership, compared with 73 to 74 percent in other regions. A gender gap persists; 76 percent of women surveyed, versus 64 percent of men, said they were church members.

NOTES ON RELIGION

According to the Gallup data reported by the Princeton center, 40 percent of Americans polled said they attended church the previous week. This number has been "remarkably constant" since 1939, the center says, except during the 1950s, when the percentage peaked at 49 percent.

Parliament of World's Religions centenary

Adherents of the principal world religions and ecumenical groups will gather in Chicago Aug. 28 to Sept. 5 for the Parliament of World's Religions to foster interfaith cooperation. The event commemorates the 1893 parliament, which is known primarily for having introduced Hinduism and Buddhism to the West, but which also saw the beginning of the ecumenical movement and recognition of the young Christian Science Church.

Represented will be the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian (Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, and others), Confucian, Hindu, indigenous, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, native American, Shinto, Sikh, Taoist, Unitarian, and Zoroastrian religions. Participants in this year's parliament will include the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, and Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Roman Catholic archbishop of Chicago. Sir John Templeton will award the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion to Charles Colson.

How to help the homeless

Many people want to help the homeless but don't know what to do. So Rabbi Charles Kroloff, senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, N.J., and vice president of the Interfaith Council for the Homeless, has published a list: "54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless." Among his suggestions: Carry fast-food gift certificates to give to panhandlers to ensure the gift is used for food; donate a bag of groceries to a food drive; ask local papers and church or synagogue bulletins to publish information on shelters. The book is published by Hugh Lauter Levin Associates and Behrman House, distributed by Macmillan, and sells for $1.95.

– Compiled by Lawrence J. Goodrich

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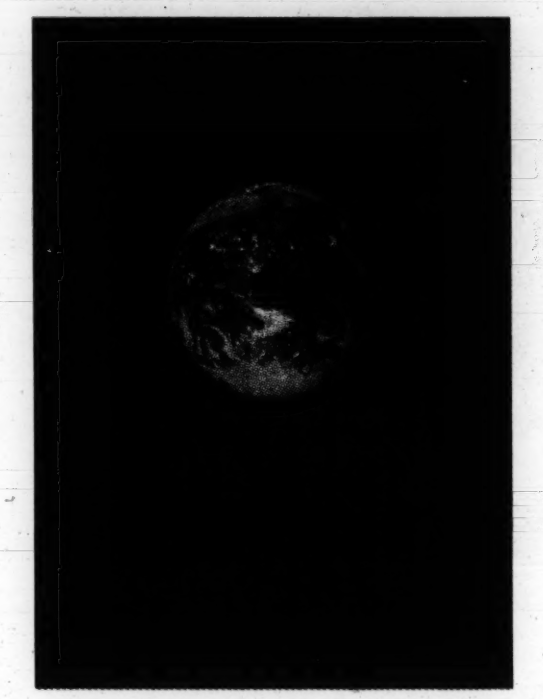

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The Home Forum

OK HARRIS WORKS OF ART, NEW YORK

'CORKSCREW BOG' (1987): *Oil on canvas, 60 by 87.5 in., by William Nichols.*

Elevating the Ordinary

The poetry of Robert Morgan

Robert Morgan is one of America's finest younger poets. Often referred to as a regional poet, his work recounts the beauty and the way of life he knew in the mountains of North Carolina. Morgan has published eleven books of poetry and has received numerous awards, among them a Guggenheim fellowship, a fellowship at the Bellagio Conference in Italy, and the North Carolina Literary Award. Since 1971, he has taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

Backyard

Canoes of watermelon rind,
pecked and pocked by chickens, float near
cabbage leaves. The wet spot where dish
water was thrown shows bits of grits
and crumbs and bright tomato skins.
Coffee grounds are darker than soil.
Chicken tracks have set in the sun.
The hubcap used for watering
pan is troubled by a bee that
sips its humor. A page of news
stuck in mud pricks up an ear.
A dead mirror dries like a fish
scale. The spirits of rot burn
a sour ghost. Such sadness at
the back of things, a stillness
of place behind the ordinary,
such a miracle of drabness.

Digger Pond

A log across a branch or big
rock will catch water behind it.
But the spill over the lip will
hollow a bigger pool below.
The plunge of water from the rim
scoops out a trough and keeps on
deepening the gash, digging out
the bed until a clear pool stands
under the twitching tongue that goes
on stirring depth and length of
the magnifying catchment with
the strength of exploration, steady voice.

Gnats

In sun this brownian mist
of shining effervescence
shows life-knots small as dust
yet lit in mating dance

above early dew. As though
light thrills every atom
in play and shouts hello
from each silent note of time.

Vastness of the Near

The littlest things recede
great distances close up,
the mite too fine to see,
the bacterium and
threshing molecule, globe
of perfume floating, bright
planet and carnival
of many-colored mists
miles and light-years away
just in front of the eye
in mute improvisations
and showing us again
remoteness of the least.

ART NOW

Sumptuous Layerings of Lines

WHOLE areas of human experience cannot really be described in words, though most of us are used to making sense of what we see, know, and feel with words. Words can be so inadequate to explain a complex emotion. Nor can an intuitive grasp of a complex situation always be explained fully in words. New York artist Richard Heinrich draws and sculpts by intuition and by intuition addresses the deep "structures" of his experience in his nonobjective works.

He has been drawing works on paper ever since he decided he was an artist. He always liked charcoal, he says, and for a long time rubbed lamp-black, a highly refined soot, directly on paper. He worked with paint stick (oil stick) and charcoal, and then moved easily into pastels.

A series he has been working on for several years (untitled except by date) appears to be highly ordered – a complex network of overlapping and layered lines apparently organized on a grid. These are slightly deceptive to the eye at first. The lines are actually laid down intuitively. Some of these drawings look like plaids from a distance, but close inspection reveals sumptuous layering of lines. The drawings also look flat at first. But the viewer begins to see the subtle shadings of depth, the more obvious emotional impact of various color changes, and the much more subtle structuring of the grids. In one there is an emotionally charged cruciform, in another, the neutral image of the window cross-pane. As similar as they are, each of these drawings makes its own very definite statement. Here is a theme with many variations.

Mr. Heinrich, who looks to Bach (particularly the "Goldberg Variations") and to jazz greats Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, and Thelonius Monk, among others, for inspiration, is profoundly involved with the hidden structures of their music.

Heinrich, who looks to Bach and to jazz greats for inspiration, is profoundly involved with the hidden structures of their music.

"I'm very interested in the structure of things," he says. "I have a great curiosity as to how things work, how they are held together. When I look at a building, I'm more intuitive about what's inside and what's holding it up.

"What I do in drawings is [make] structural connections rather than a visual illusionism. As with the structure of music, Bach and jazz, the drawings become a kind of improvisational performance," he says.

"In improvisation, a musician will play a series of chords and will play this chord from the bottom, then from the top, and so on. The sound process becomes a layer on top of a layer and culminates in a crescendo. The layers develop into a complete whole. That's the way the drawing is made – it's developed, one line on top of another, in the structural sense. But it is improvisational – there is no preliminary sketch even with the sculptures. What I do, I have in mind, and I do it directly. There's no planning other than [choosing] size and format."

The end result, he says, is a combination of an emotional catharsis and a recording of something – a visual experience – that cannot be narrated in language. He calls it an intuitive response or nonlinguistic interpretation of visual experience.

The drawings represent subtle variations on a theme. The more you look the more you see. Particularly impressive is a piece in black and gold leaf, insinuating associations with medieval painting. The intricate shadings form shadows on the grid. Hard to reproduce, the little drawing is beautiful, oddly satisfying, and hints at eternity. Though there is a feeling of closure – of a finished work of art – there is also an implication that the idea of the work goes on forever. Like thought itself, the image is many layered, intricate, and open-ended.

Marilynne S. Mason

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

'10-17-92' (1992): *Pastel on paper, 22 by 30 in., by Richard Heinrich.*

Spiritual Promptness

IT was spiritual promptness that allowed Jesus to stop the funeral procession and restore the woman's son to life. This story, found in the Gospel of Luke in the Bible, has always impressed me. The power Christ Jesus expressed, and the courage and trust in God that he had, enabled him to raise the dead in the presence of many people—at a very public time.

Recently I learned that *promptness* really implies more than just being "on time." It also refers to being ready and quick to act as the situation demands. Isn't this what Christ Jesus did when he stopped the pallbearers and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise"? And the man was restored to life.

Because this newfound understanding of promptness has impressed me so, I've been praying to express it more in my own life. I've been striving to really be prayerfully ready to respond to any circumstance, no matter how unexpected it may be.

I still have a way to go! But I've been finding how important it is to be ready to pray. Prayer not only heals but also prevents difficulties. Prayer demonstrates man's oneness with God. Whatever God is, man reflects. This doesn't mean that man is God, but rather that he is Godlike, made in God's image, in His similitude. Thus man, our genuine selfhood, acts in accord with God and is ready, quick to respond to any need.

The Christian Science Monitor's Religious Article

Recently, one of our children fell and hit her head. Instead of bouncing back to her feet she began to cry and was very upset. I took her in my arms to comfort her. I spoke to her of her God-given perfection, which had never left her. I reminded her that God protects His children and that she could never be out of His care.

But the more I talked to her, the more I began to wonder if she really understood me. Doubt and fear set in, and I wondered what was going to help her. Then two thoughts came that reassured me. The first was from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, written by the Founder of the Christian Science Church, Mary Baker Eddy. It was: "Children are more tractable than adults, and learn more readily to love the simple verities that will make them happy and good." In the next paragraph she continues: "Jesus loved little children because of their freedom from wrong and their receptiveness of right." This helped me because I realized that it was natural for her to love and respond to good, to love God and His messages.

The second thought that came was the fact that what I was doing was expressing the spiritual promptness that I had been praying to see more of in my experience. At that very moment I was praying as the situation demanded—to know and feel the healing power and presence of God. I knew that this spiritual promptness was a blessing to me and to our child. Immediately she settled down and climbed from my lap perfectly healed.

The Bible counsels us in II Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." Praying to be spiritually ready to heal, and to prevent, inharmonious experiences prepares us to meet the challenges we face. Turning to God and striving to follow His commands give us the spiritual strength and courage we need to stand up to whatever is erroneous and correct it. We may feel that we're far from ready to express spiritual promptness. Yet, we can begin by acknowledging that God is in control of man. The more we're ready to respond to inharmonious conditions by turning promptly to God, the better we'll be at handling them. Christ Jesus raised the dead through his spiritual confidence that God is All. We can base our responses on an understanding of the allness of God. This begins with prayer, and we can practice praying with immediacy.

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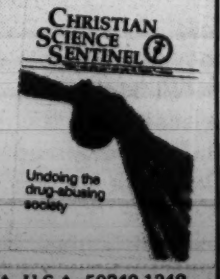


"First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

EDITORIALS

The European Slow Boat

THE dream of a single Europe – a unitary state with a common defense and economic policy – has been on the rocks since Denmark voted against the Maastricht Treaty last May. In the intervening year a weak French "yes" to Maastricht, monetary chaos, and rifts over the former Yugoslavia further eroded unity. Privately, European officials say Maastricht, as voted on in December of 1991, is nearly dead.

The end of the treaty, however, need not mean the end of the dream. On Tuesday the Danes kept a semblance of formal European union alive by voting "yes" in a second referendum on Maastricht. This was important since it means debate and discussion inside the EC states will continue. A no vote would have permanently killed the treaty.

But Brussels is a long way from declaring victory. For one thing, the Danes voted "yes" mainly because the most controversial aspects of Maastricht had been removed from the referendum. The real sticking points in the treaty – profound points many ordinary Europeans feel they have had no role in deciding – are common security, common currency, and common citizenship. These were the issues that sank Maastricht in Denmark last May. These issues were removed from the version of the treaty Danes voted for on Tuesday. It was as if the Danes said of European disunion, "Let this not be on our heads."

The Danish vote for a modified version of the treaty may set a useful pattern, however. It allows politicians such as Britain's John Major and Germany's Helmut Kohl – who have staked enormous political capital in Maastricht – to save face. It allows time for tinkering and for a political strategy to emerge on such questions as local control. The British version of the treaty voted on today in the House of Commons will doubtless appear without a commitment to a single currency. The German version will likely protect the deutsche mark, and disallow common citizenship.

Such proprietary votes are not quite indications of failure, as many Euro-bashers say. They may signal a starting point from which a new Europe can be negotiated. Issues of security, money, ethnic identity, and self-government cut to the heart of how people live and define themselves. If there was any failure, it was in the arrogant assumption of those negotiating Maastricht in 1991 that these issues could be decided on in a private, week-long meeting – then pushed onto the general populace with no questions asked.

A cooperative, democratic Europe is greatly to be desired – particularly since the poisonous fumes of nationalism are sweeping through the region. Liberal ideals, as well as common trade, must progress. The EC must not become an exclusive club; former East-bloc states must be included. The dream of Europe must continue – broader and deeper.

A Need for 'Maintenance'

FOR several months, the unemployment rate in the United States has hovered at 7 percent. Job creation is lagging its historic average for this stage of a recovery. One key reason: corporate reliance on overtime. This is typical coming out of a recession. Uncertain about the course of the recovery, employers meet increased orders with overtime until the economy looks firm enough to merit hiring more employees.

This time, however, the sluggish nature of the recovery and the high costs of employee benefits are prompting many employers to stretch out the use of overtime. In April, average overtime for factory workers reached 4.3 hours a week, the highest level since the federal government began tracking overtime in 1948.

While this clearly works to the disadvantage of the unemployed, it also has an underappreciated impact on those still on the job. Workers initially welcome the increased income that overtime brings. But the longer overtime runs, the more counterproductive it becomes: morale and efficiency drop. One Gillette Company executive noted recently that his firm finally hired part-timers to cover weekend shifts that had been covered by overtime. The reason: increasing levels of stress among workers. Referring to the overtime levels, he noted, "You cannot do that indefinitely."

It isn't hard to see why. Just as many companies tend to defer maintenance when they lose money, it is tempting to defer what might be called personal maintenance when one feels a loss of time. This manifests itself in many ways: deferred or slighted maintenance of a role in church or community activities, of relations with family and friends, or even of a responsible eating and exercise schedule.

In these uncertain times, it is crucial to respect and defend personal maintenance time – and make the best use of it. If the squeeze helps people refocus from the merely urgent or amusingly frivolous to the truly important, our personal, family, community, and corporate lives will only benefit. The danger lies in a squeeze that cuts into the truly important.

Behind the Funding Crisis Facing US Public Schools

By Mary Fulton

NORTH Chicago School District 187 decides to dissolve itself as its tax revenues dry up and its deficit soars. A small district in Michigan (Kalkaska) opts to close its doors three months early for lack of funds rather than provide anything less than a "quality" education to students. The courts rule Alabama's entire education system unconstitutional and Tennessee's system of funding education unconstitutional.

These recent crises raise fundamental concerns about how we pay for education. Political, economic, social, and demographic changes resurface age-old questions and pose new and increasingly complex challenges for providing educational resources. At the very least, the situations faced by these and other troubled districts and states should serve as a warning to officials that now is the time to take a close look at the fiscal stability of their school systems and the funding equity of their states. Now is the time to explore new ways to meet these demands, before a crisis occurs.

The central concern is how states and districts can create equitable, stable funding that supports a high-quality education system for each child.

To fully appreciate how daunting the task of redirecting existing resources or finding new sources of funding can be, it is important to understand the complexities that contribute to the current funding situation for schools. Perhaps the most intimidating aspect of funding schools is that it's only part of a package deal. In other words, we cannot approach school finance in isolation from other education reform efforts. Other issues include:

■ Limited resources to tap for education. After years of being first in line, education is increasingly in competition, especially with Medicaid and corrections, for tight state dollars; property values, which produce the primary tax source for local education, are stagnant; government's costs for providing services have been passed from the federal to the state level, and in turn to the local level – the so-called "cascade" effect of fiscal responsibility; and following significant increases during the '80s, state funding of education has leveled off, forcing many districts to exhaust local resources to cover enrollment and inflation growth.

■ Increased demands on the education system. Schools are experiencing an enrollment "boomlet" that includes more students with multiple and special needs; and rising poverty and language barriers pile more responsibility on urban, rural, and suburban districts.

■ A resurgence of school finance equity lawsuits. More than half of the states have recently been or are now being sued by districts and community members who claim that states do not adequately and equitably fund schools; legal rulings citing unconstitutional funding often dominate legislative sessions, sending lawmakers on a long, frustrating search for additional money or ways to redistribute current resources.

■ The cost of a high-quality education. There is a general consensus that students need to be learning at higher levels. But considerable disagreement remains as to whether a better education requires more money, a different allocation of existing funds, or both; the chicken-and-egg question appears as educators claim that improvements can't be achieved without sufficient (additional) funds, and policymakers and the public are reluctant to provide additional resources until student performance improves.

■ A lack of community support. As passing property tax increases and bond elections become increasingly difficult, it is clear that educators must do a better job of communicating *what* is going on in their schools and *why* they need additional funding; an aging population (only 20 to 25 pecent of the voting population has children in school) means more senior citizens are on fixed or limited incomes with less of an ability to pay more and less of a connection to local schools; growing dissatisfaction with public education's inability to address diverse needs and values is increasing the demand for tax dollars to support private and alternative schools. Given these and other demands on school funding, some key issues must be addressed, and more importantly, acted on. The central concern is how states and districts can create equitable, stable funding that supports a quality education system for each child.

New York and Vermont are exploring the use of local income taxes to reduce the demand solely on property taxes. Kansas has implemented a funding system that attempts to spread property wealth more evenly to every child throughout the state, rather than keeping tax revenue within district boundaries. Other states and districts are also beginning to recognize that the name of the game is doing a better job with less money. But the battles within education for tight dollars will likely increase as more people are pushed to give up familiar turf for something unknown.

The writing is on the wall. In order to thrive, and in some cases just to survive, school systems must reevaluate how they're doing business. They must understand where their money is going, where they can get by with less, and where they genuinely need more. They must work hard at clear communication with all of the players. They cannot ride out the current economic plight and return to business as usual. State policymakers and the public must be committed to providing system-wide quality education. Bandaid solutions will not fix the finance system or satisfy the courts. No longer can the caliber of a child's education be determined by the property wealth of his or her district, the will and ability of the local tax payers to provide sufficient funds, or the political compromises of state lawmakers.

■ *Mary Fulton is a policy analyst at the Education Commission of the States, an interstate compact that works with state leaders to improve the quality of education.*

OPINION/ESSAYS

Plans for military intervention cannot ignore collateral damage and must consider efforts of local peace groups

Declare and Enforce 'Safe Havens' in Bosnia

By Jennifer M. Green

WHILE diplomats debate the Vance-Owen peace plan and the number of bombs to be dropped to end the atrocity in the Balkans, who is asking about the impact of those bombs on the civilian population? Are options being considered that are likely to assist the people most in need, to prevent the unnecessary loss of civilian lives and promote lasting peace?

The seeming urgency of military intervention is prompted by concern over how to assist Bosnian civilians subjected to the genocidal policies of the Serbs. But certainly the international community should consider the impact of intervention on all innocent civilians. The record of the United States demonstrates the harm that results when such concerns are downplayed or ignored.

In the 1991 Gulf war, often lauded as an exemplar of multilateral action to protect a people subjected to genocidal actions, thousands of civilians living in Iraq were killed as a result of air strikes. One Iraqi professor, Mohammad Khader, lost his wife and four daughters in the bombing of a Baghdad civilian shelter. He waits in vain for some action by the international community to compensate or even acknowledge responsibility for his loss.

Another example of "collateral damage" are the Farhats, a Lebanese family who, after Iraq was expelled from Kuwait, were brutally attacked by the Kuwaiti military. In the aftermath of the war fought on its behalf, the newly restored Kuwaiti emirate unleashed a campaign of terror, chiefly against non-Kuwaitis, adding thousands of victims to the toll inflicted by the war.

Days after the war, a Kuwaiti resistance fighter raped Naimat Farhat, shot her in the head and murdered her father and brother. Efforts to secure justice from the Kuwaiti government and the international community have, more than two years after the atrocities, gone unfulfilled.

One potential model of action to end the slaughter and minimize the number of innocent civilian deaths inflicted while "saving" the Bosnians could be the nonsectarian "safe havens" proposed by the New York Citizens Committee on Bosnia-Herzegovina. This proposal requires the Security Council to authorize the secretary-general to declare the areas in most danger as "safe havens." Unlike the current United Nations "safe havens," this action would have to be enforced. A multilateral UN force should be authorized to demilitarize the area, disarm the populations, lead to safety noncombatants on all sides of the conflict, use appropriate force to defend themselves and their charges, and carry out the Security Council's mandate.

JEFF DANZIGER – STAFF

Instead of having the abstract purpose of "rolling back the Serbs" by tactics such as "strategic air strikes," safe havens would have the immediate impact of protecting innocent victims of the war. Similarly, this proposal could provide direct assistance, unlike the proposal to arm the Bosnians by lifting the arms embargo. Even if arms were to reach the Bosnians, lifting the embargo would run the risk of escalating the conflict by drawing neighboring countries into the war.

A UN safe havens force could also lead to political solutions. Such a force would preserve the multiethnic character of the republics and offer immediate security and reliable humanitarian relief to trapped populations. It would also give the international community an opportunity to work with and support the efforts of Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs working for peace.

The republics of the former Yugoslavia are far from monolithic. A New York-based women's coalition against war crimes in the former Yugoslavia has been in contact with groups such as "Women in Black," a coalition of Serbian women in Belgrade, and the "Independent Alliance of Women in Croatia." The Center for Antiwar Action in Belgrade has also been working for the enforcement of humanitarian law. These are just a few examples of groups working for peace. Has the UN contacted these dissident groups? Have efforts been made to strengthen them?

Any intervention plan by the UN must consider civilian casualties, the means to compensate those hurt, and ways to help citizens working for peace. American citizens should not allow our government to sit idly while Bosnians are massacred. But we must not tolerate another case where bombs are used against people in order to "save" them – while our government walks away from the devastation left behind.

■ *Jennifer M. Green is the administrative director of the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School.*

South Africa's Journalists Will Face New Challenges

THROUGHOUT South Africa's long decades of darkness, individual journalists both black and white have often demonstrated remarkable courage in withstanding the forces of oppression. Some have paid for this defiance with their lives.

But now, with the end of apartheid in sight, South Africa's press is about to embark on a new and uncharted role.

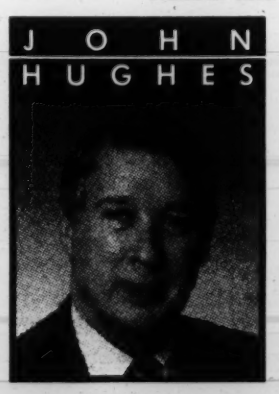
The great newspaper monopolies controlled by whites are on the defensive as blacks demand access to ownership and influence. The state-controlled radio and television system, long the instrument of the governing National Party, is similarly due for an overhaul, which will mean more balance in programming.

There will be sweeping changes in the structure and operating methods of the press as blacks assume political control and Nelson Mandela, their leader, probably becomes South Africa's first black president.

An international media conference in South Africa to consider such prospects recently came to the conclusion that the "mass media" may be the "only instruments available for reconstruction, reconciliation and development."

This may be an overly sweeping claim, but there can be no doubt that journalists are going to play a key role, not only in the transition to democratic rule in South Africa, but in the aftermath that may be even more critical.

JOHN HUGHES



In the run-up to the election, journalists must bring dispassion to a country long roiled by passion. They must hew to the path of objectivity, amid tangled thickets of recrimination. Throughout the coming South African election campaign, there may be violence and attempts to sabotage the process. There are the challenges of tribalism and factionalism. There may be attempts to subvert the press, to hoodwink it, to use it, to bend it to advocacy reporting, to make it the pawn of particular politicians or lobbyists.

Yet, somehow, the journalists of South Africa must try to present the issues, analyze the platforms, and assess the potential of the candidates, with the kind of responsibility that sometimes eludes even the press in countries with longtime democratic traditions.

With the election over, even larger problems loom.

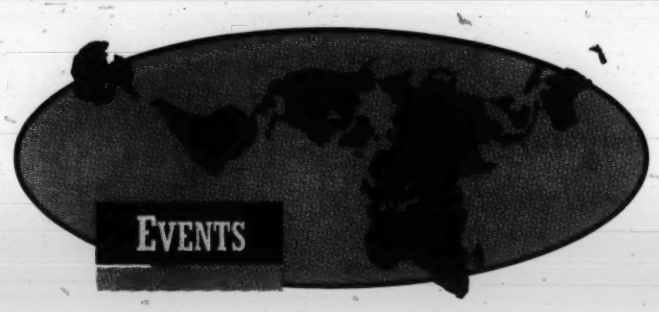
For the journalist, freedom does not always bring independence. Journalists in Russia and Eastern Europe have learned this bitter lesson. The old regimes that controlled what newspapers could publish and television stations could air have sometimes been replaced with regimes almost as autocratic. Sometimes the apparently liberated journalist is, in fact, the prisoner of a political party or a trade union. Sometimes the journalist's publication has been bought by a flamboyant new publisher. Sometimes the journalist finds himself working for a paper that appeals to the lowest common denominator in reader interests.

Black journalists in South Africa, who have clearly been at a disadvantage in marshaling resources to own their own news organizations, are discussing subsidies. It would be a tragedy if such subsidies hobbled their independence. If there are to be subsidies, government subsidies are the least desirable.

Despite the lure of political reporting, South Africa after its transition will need a lot of clear-headed economic reporting. Whites, as the London Economist put it recently, enjoy living standards ranking with those of Hungary and some of the better-off Latin American countries; black living standards equate with those of Zimbabwe and Botswana. Whatever redistribution there may be of resources, blacks, as the Economist puts it, "will stay poor until South Africa finds a way to expand its economy."

How does the journalist in South Africa make a constructive contribution to this economic development without becoming the pawn of a political party or government that seeks to impose political direction over what he or she writes? How does the journalist confront reality without losing integrity?

As South Africa enters an exhilarating but immensely delicate chapter in its history, its journalists will need to muster all the courage they have displayed in combating apartheid in the past.



US TRADE DEFICIT CLIMBS SHARPLY

The United States merchandise trade deficit soared to $10.2 billion in March, the worst showing in almost four years, as imports hit an all-time high, the government said yesterday. The Commerce Department said that American demand for foreign oil and automobiles contributed to a dramatic 29.1 percent widening of the trade gap, compared with a February deficit of $7.9 billion. The March deficit was far worse than economists had been expecting and likely will cause the government to revise down its assessment for how the overall economy performed during the January-March period from an already sluggish rate of 1.8 percent growth in the gross domestic product. So far this year, the US deficit is running at an annual rate of $103 billion compared with last year's $84.5 billion deficit.

Serb fighters sentenced

Thirteen Serb militiamen have been convicted by a military court and sentenced to the maximum 20 years in prison for terrorism and plotting against Croatia, the Zagreb daily Vjesnik reported yesterday. Croatian Serbs, backed by the Serb-dominated Yugoslav Army, captured a third of Croatia after rebelling against its declaration of independence in 1991. Rebel Serbs have refused Croat demands to return the territory.

Iranian arms buildup

Aggressive arms-buying by Iran has rekindled concern about the Islamic nation's military ambitions, the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in its annual report yesterday. Western leaders are worried both because Iran is replacing the arsenal lost in its 1980-88 war with Iraq and because of Islamic fundamentalists' challenges to the more moderate President Hashemi Rafsanjani, the report said.

Genoa's mayor arrested

Another prominent Italian politician was snared yesterday, with the arrest of Genoa's mayor in connection with the celebrations of the city's native son, Christopher Columbus, news reports said. Claudio Burlando was the first mayor of a major city to be arrested in a series of sweeps that have resulted in the arrests or investigations of hundreds of politicians since February 1992. Mr. Burlando was arrested on charges of swindling and abuse of office, the reports said.

Strikes wind down

Strikes in the east German steel industry continued yesterday, but metalworkers began returning to their jobs with union-supplied bands serenading the end of the first strikes in six decades in the region. Up to 40,000 workers had been on strike daily since May 3 demanding that employers reinstate a broken promise to phase in western German pay scales.

Canada backs S. Africa

Canada has pledged an additional $7.8 million to support reform in South Africa, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall said yesterday in Johannesburg. "Canada is very encouraged by the recent and significant progress in the multiparty negotiations in South Africa," she said.

War bonuses vetoed

Breaking with a tradition that began with World War I, Pennsylvania voters overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to pay cash bonuses of up to $525 to the state's 33,000 veterans of the Gulf war. States traditionally have given cash bonuses to war veterans, and Pennsylvania voters did so for soldiers who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Call for logging curbs

The US Forest Service is being asked by some of its own employees to adopt strict prohibitions against logging near rivers and streams on national forests. Leaders of a group of 2,000 past and present agency workers said they would file a petition with the service in Washington yesterday for a regulation requiring a 300-foot buffer be placed between streams and logging activities in five Western states. The buffer zones are needed to slow erosion and landslides that are choking off sensitive fish populations, said a spokesman for the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics in Eugene, Ore.

– Compiled by Ross Atkin

An international child-custody battle entangles Australia and neighbors – a letter from Sydney

A Case for Family Court

By Catherine Foster
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

SYDNEY

A DRAMATIC international child-custody battle has politicians nervous, courts perplexed, and citizens outraged in Australia, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

The story seems destined to be a TV movie: A Malaysian prince studying architecture in Melbourne falls in love with an Australian student of Chinese descent. They move back to Malaysia, marry, and have two children. The marriage founders; they divorce, he gets custody. She gets permission from him to take the children on a brief visit to Australia. But she doesn't return with them.

Then the prince, Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah, comes for a visit and with the help of an Australian man (who had lost custody of his own children to his ex-wife) spirits them through Indonesian territory to Malaysia by car, boat, and aircraft.

Since then Jacqueline Gillespie, the prince's ex-wife and a journalist, has been giving TV interviews exhorting the Australian government to get her children back.

The case has been covered exhaustively here, and the government faces increasing pressure to take action. Australia's attorney general announced recently that he would seek the prince's extradition.

But legally Australia's options are few. It does not have an extradition treaty with Malaysia, which is not party to the Hague convention on international enforcement of custody orders. And even if the government could get the prince returned, getting the children back would be another issue.

The problem is a clash of laws:

Under Australian law, she has custody.

Under Malaysian law, he has custody.

The prince argues that it was Mrs. Gillespie who abducted the children when she refused to bring them back after their short visit to Australia in 1985. In response to the Australian government's extradition threat, the father has made one of his own: to seek Gillespie's extradition to Malaysia for not returning the children.

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Gareth Evans is handling the case gingerly. While his office has had numerous communications with Gillespie's lawyers, he has so far refused her requests for a personal meeting.

Religious differences bear heavily on the case as well: Gillespie has converted to Christianity, and public opinion in Islamic Malaysia supports the prince, who wants to raise the children as Muslims. He was greeted as a hero when he returned with the children.

Several Malaysian ministers have made statements supporting the prince.

But Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Mohamad has said he will not block Australia's extradition request. Prime Minister Mahathir has taken some strong steps this past year to remove some of the constitutional privileges accorded to the royal families in his country.

The episode couldn't have come at a worse time for Australia, which is strengthening its trade links with both Malaysia and Indonesia. In the last five years, exports have increased 30 percent with the latter and 14 percent with the former.

And Australia has just finished smoothing things over with Indonesia after some unflattering articles about President Suharto's family appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald. Things were just simmering down over Malaysia's objections to an Australian television show about a fictitious Muslim Southeast Asian country that offended Malaysians. The show was produced by the government-owned Australian Broadcasting Corp., and diplomats have spent two years trying to convince Malaysia that the state has no control over the programming.

Both governments insist the custody case can be settled in family court, with no implications for the bilateral relationship.